

accomplished. Eighty yaks, ponies, and coolies made up the train. Now, though the pass is easy, it is quite a business to get such a following over glacier and moraine. I much prefer the glacier to the moraine, and indeed the lower end of the Bhot Khol glacier, though considerably crevassed, was not difficult to negotiate.

We took our time from here to Suknes, the highest village of the Wardwan, or rather the weather took it for us, for on two days we nearly had all our belongings washed into the river. Still, we did well, capturing another peak over Konnag, approximately 17,500 feet, which gave us a most enjoyable day, with some of the best ice and rock climbing we had had; indeed a big traverse across an ice face was quite as sensational as I personally care for—a long day from camp, but only one day, and really typical of one of the best kinds of quite insignificant Himalayan peaks in which one can really enjoy oneself, and about which no one can quarrel or accuse one of not having done one's best, or of having generally behaved in any way deleterious to the sport of mountaineering.

The next little interlude occurred during the ascent of a valley with the euphonious name of Wishni Wājān, at the head of which is an apparently easy point which suggested a fine *coup d'œil*, and from which I was anxious to obtain a view over

the mountains to the north. The weather broke again and stopped climbing, but I managed to account for two red bears, after rather an exciting experience. They were feeding on the opposite side of the river from where we were, and near the head of the valley, and some 2500 feet above us. Now bears can't see far, and the wind was entirely in our favour, so we went up the stream in full view without exciting their attention. Unfortunately, the stream was rapid and deep, and we did not find a way across till near a very steep little glacier snout higher up. Still, we had to get through somehow. Four of us first took most of our clothing off, and with the help of a rope and locked arms got through, though the water came nearly to our waists. Harkabir and Karbir arranged the stalk and luckily carried my rifle, for here we had no time to lose, and they went off as hard as I could follow them. Our costumes were quite suitable; theirs consisted of a waistcoat apiece, while mine was a shirt and shoes. We were, in fact, thoroughly suitably equipped. The stalk was successful, and the bears were rolled down the hill-side and dragged through the stream with the assistance of the whole party with the climbing ropes.

We spent a few pleasant and rather epicurean days in the Wardwan at Suknes, or near it, and then

TWENTY YEARS
IN THE HIMALAYA



C. S. Bruce.

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD

TWENTY YEARS IN THE HIMALAYA

BY

MAJOR THE HON. C. G. BRUCE, M.V.O.

FIFTH GOORKHA RIFLES

WITH 60 ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

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PREFACE

I AM attempting in this book to give to those interested in Mountain Travel and Mountain Exploration, who have not been so luckily placed as myself, some account of the Hindu Koosh and Himalaya ranges. My wanderings cover a period of nineteen years, during which I have not been able to do more than pierce these vast ranges, as one might stick a needle into a bolster, in many places ; for no one can lay claim to a really intimate knowledge of the Himalaya alone, as understood in the mountaineering sense at home. There are still a great number of districts which remain for me new ground, as well as the 500 miles of the Himalaya included in "Nepal," which, to all intents and purposes, is still unexplored.

My object is to try and show the great contrasts between people, country, life, etc. that exist in the different districts, from the Kafir border on the west to the Bhootan border on the east. Between these extremities probably no greater contrasts could be found on the world's surface. The

Highlands of Scotland and Southern Italy do not present greater contrasts.

Language, manners, customs, and the appearance of the people have nothing in common, and even the vegetation varies entirely.

(Many of the expeditions in which I have taken part have already been fully detailed, and I do not intend to do more than add a few personal experiences.)

To the keenest climber mountaineering in these great ranges is more of the character of mountain travel than of a climbing expedition, such as could be planned in Switzerland, and at present it must be so, unless the traveller is content to march direct to some group and stay there. But few travellers are so content, as there is so much new country to be seen, and all the surroundings are of such interest that the time for climbing particular peaks has not yet arrived. Even if any single collection of mountains were taken, such as the more or less isolated Nanga Parbat group, a great deal of time must be lost in exploring for the correct route by which to attack the mountain, which incurs covering a great amount of country, probably with the additional worry and trouble of a large train of coolies.

The transport question throughout the Hindu Kooshi and Himalaya is undoubtedly a difficulty, but

in my opinion should not be so great a one as many recent travellers have found it. They, however, are generally handicapped by being unable to communicate direct with the people, and by not understanding their point of view. The different native races are much worse fed, certainly worse clothed, and probably more superstitious regarding the great mountains than the Swiss were 100 years ago, and yet there was considerable difficulty at that period in getting even the best chamois hunters to undertake any new bit of exploration. What would have happened if a whole village had been ordered to send every available man with some unknown Englishman, and to stay with him for a fortnight above the snow-line, is better imagined than described, yet this is what must necessarily occur in the Himalaya.

It will therefore be understood that to get the best work out of men who cannot be expected to go, as a body, anything but most unwillingly, requires tact, sympathy, and understanding kindness towards them, as well as considerable assistance, in the matter of extra food and clothing, if they are to be employed for any length of time.

I must here mention the remarkable success of Mr. Monrad Aas and Mr. Rubensen with their parties, whom they took to a height of 22,000 feet, and with whom they stayed, I believe, for a

week and more at over 20,000 feet. I employed some of the same men last year,¹ and they told me that they were perfectly willing to go back to the snows at any time. Of course natives of different districts differ so much in physique and character that good results cannot be always expected (any more than the same kind of treatment is suitable for all), but there are many races in the mountains quite capable of giving the best assistance to mountaineering parties, especially if properly treated in a manner they understand. Travellers of no Eastern experience seem to me to have either treated all natives as being quite useless and helpless, or else to have expected of them much too high a standard. The truth is that even amongst the least enterprising tribes there are always a few really good men to be got, and among the most enterprising there are always a good percentage of shirkers. Such a condition is not unheard of even in Switzerland. The great difficulty for travellers is that they have to take whatever porters they can get, and have not the opportunity or time to pick and choose. The best natives, however, though quite at home in ordinary snow, have no familiarity with the upper ice world in the same manner that Alpine guides and porters have. In fact I have never

¹ April 1899.

met any native who, for knowledge and judgment of snow or of ice, or in power of dealing with either, was ever the equal of any second-rate Alpine guide.

A great deal of the most delightful of Himalayan travel can be done in the second grade valleys, and certainly, to my mind, in far more beautiful and attractive country than the great bare mountains and valleys of the farther ranges, however stupendous and wonderful their ice scenery may be. In these middle ranges many of the transport difficulties can be obviated. It is only when one pushes far afield, many days' journey from villages, in the great wastes of mountain and ice, far beyond human habitation, that the porter question becomes really vital. Roads fit for animals are few and far between, though the domesticated yak does yeoman service whenever he can be obtained, and is a most wonderful animal, clumsy in appearance, but walking with apparent ease over ground that would puzzle any pony or mule, and quite happy in a climate which would be fatal to either without shelter or protection.

A last word on the training of mountaineers; it is almost an impossibility to train a mountaineer in the Himalaya. The country is too large, not sufficient variety can be obtained, and for an amateur one has to go so far, and gets so few days in the real mountains. The Himalaya will

never produce an Alexander Burgener or an Emile Rey: it is impossible to get the experience. No! not even fancy rock-climbing will ever arrive, for there is much too much of interest on all sides to spend much time in any one locality. All mountaineers who wish to have an all-round knowledge must train in the Alps. Two or three seasons under first-rate guides or amateurs in the Alps will teach ten times as much as a lifetime of Himalayan mountain travel or Shikar, for purposes of further exploration; and, looking back, I can see what an immense amount I have lost by not having had that training. I have done my best to make up for it later, but without any real success; if I could only have looked forward when quite young, I should have eliminated many difficulties and accomplished many more actual climbs. Still I do not regret my wanderings, though I often think with a sigh of the problems that I have needlessly refused to tackle.

I have to thank, for photographs and much other assistance, Dr. T. G. Longstaff, Mr. A. L. Mumm, Professor Collie, Mr. G. Hastings, Captain the Honourable A. C. Murray, and last, but certainly not least, Mr. Burlington Smith of Darjeeling for his beautiful Panorama of the Eastern Himalaya.

C. G. BRUCE.

October 1910.

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TWENTY YEARS
IN THE HIMALAYA



TWENTY YEARS IN THE HIMALAYA

CHAPTER I

NEPAL AND SIKHIM

ALL who take interest in things Himalayan must have at times had their curiosity whetted by the long narrow stretch of the great main Himalayan range included in the kingdom of Nepal, known and yet unknown; marching with our own dominion for no less than 500 miles; carrying on an extensive trade with us, and supplying us with 25,000 Goorkha soldiers, and yet, with the exception of the one main road to the capital at Khatmandu, quite unexplored by the European. Nor is it realised, even in India, how highly organised and well governed this State is, though it still remains a relic of what may be termed ancient civilisation, with modern improvements grafted on to it. Of a truth the land is full of contradictions—an ancient orthodox Hinduism, observed in the strictest manner, side by side with electric light installation

set up by Nepalese engineers; a practically modern system of sanitation in the near towns with an excellent water-supply, next door to the crudest illustrations, very much of the Tantric Department of the Hindu religion, adorning the walls of the houses in public thoroughfares; prison laws and a treatment of criminals, often in front of anything we can attain to in Europe, coupled with severe punishment for the slaughter of kine. In fact, a country full of contradictions, and the last country of romance in all our Indian possessions—long may it remain so.

I have no hesitation in saying that my one short trip to Nepal was more full of interest to me than any other expedition of my life. Having served for twenty-one years in a Goorkha regiment, and being familiar with a certain amount of the traditions and customs, and, to as great an extent as possible, with the geography of the country, it can be imagined with what pleasure and no less enthusiasm I received an invitation from Major Manners Smith, the Resident, to spend Christmas with him in 1907. Still, though I had seen numerous photographs, and talked with many officers and others who had visited Nepal, I was by no means prepared for what I saw, and further, I was by no means prepared either for the extraordinary contrast of ordinary life and manners to



GOORKHA LOAD CARRIERS.



VILLAGE, NEPAL VALLEY.

those of all other parts of the Indian Continent. It is a country of innumerable mixed races, all showing to a greater or less extent their Mongolian descent, and I was greatly struck not only by the air of well-being and of industry, but by the complete separation and aloofness of the people and of their surroundings. The ruling classes, who are the product of barbarian Mongol blood, mingled with the best blood in India, are generally distinguished without difficulty by their physical appearance.

The old resident in India on his journey up to Nepal is surprised and startled by being met with generally smiling faces, by being asked by little ladies seated on the wayside whether he isn't thirsty—that is, if he is not travelling in too much state and has a sufficiently unconventional mind to smile back at all smilers.

The journey to Nepal is one of intense interest. After travelling in a succession of small-gauge railways through the deadly dull plains of Upper Bengal, annoyed at every station by the babblings of Neolithic man in the person of Bengali ryots, one arrives finally at the back of beyond—Raxaul Station—saved at the eleventh hour from what the begging letter writer has called self-self-destruction, by arrival at the real comforts of the Residency Bungalow. Raxaul is really the end of all things. It is a howling wilderness, approached

by the vilest of vile roads, yet three miles off lies the great mart of Birganj ; not at all Nepalese, but very Indian, in respect to its hideous squalor, which is, so to speak, illuminated here and there by the residences of the Superior Civil Service of Nepal, to wit, the Governor's house, the local General's, and the local officers, representing Indian Deputy Commissioners, etc.

The bazaar is large and does great business, nearly all the merchandise, of whatever size, which passes through it being forwarded to Nepal—the heavier by elephants and bullock-carts for half the distance, the remainder by man, who is the universal porter, for Nepal is almost entirely without baggage animals.

The road from this frontier mart is a very wonderful sight. A distinguished mountaineer has lately remarked that, though he recognised merits, he considered that he preferred Europeans to any Asiatic native—technical qualifications being put on one side—on account of their greater power of resisting fatigue and discomfort. I have always doubted his outlook, and since my visit to Nepal doubt it still more. The inhabitants, all small, of a Japanese build, but varying, owing to their descent, in colour and physiognomy, come down to the frontier mart to earn a living, and there earn it by the sweat of their brows.

The road from the frontier to Nepal is roughly seventy-five miles.

On my journeys to and back from Nepal I took great interest in the innumerable carriers I passed. from, I suppose, a purely athletic point of view, but I measured roughly, having large experience, many of the loads (a picture of two is shown overleaf), and found that the amount carried was often from 300 to 400 lbs. in weight.

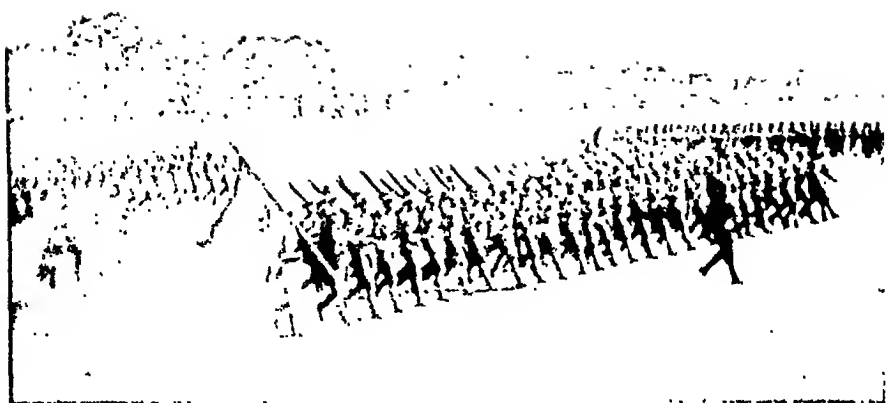
The road to Nepal is, to say the least of it, rough. It leaves the plains at a height of about 500 feet above the sea, traversing stony river-beds, and crossing two passes of no less than 7000 feet odd, arrives in Nepal at about 4800. I wonder how many of the best carrying natives in Europe would take on that contract at 6d. per day pay. Their food is chiefly grain porridge, though sometimes fish can be bought at the bazaars on the road, and they are not teetotallers, a very annoying fact to a large group of doctrinaires.

The great main thoroughfare to the prosperous State of Nepal is enough, to put it vulgarly, to make a cat laugh. It is about as bad as a road could well be, but one arrives every four miles at a most pleasant and surprising tank, with a stand-pipe for water, and an excellent drinking-pond for animals, the intervening road being merely the jungle. Then one realises that it is done of political neces-

sity, and that although pipes are laid on, and a road could be made with the greatest facility, it is considered essential to the maintenance of political supremacy to leave things as they are. All these tanks are the gift of the late Maharani, wife of Sir Chandra Shiam Sher Jaing.

On the way one passes the position where General Ochterlony managed to out-manceuvre the Goorkha General in the war of 1814-15-16. From a military point of view, it is enough to make one weep to consider the hopeless want of military activity on the part of the Goorkha commander which made a British victory possible. I am still afraid that for military success the important rule that the higher one gets the greater mental, and, to a certain extent, physical hardness is required, is not understood among the heads of the Nepalese army, excellent though it remains in many ways.

From here the road runs to Bhimphedi, the real entrance to Nepal. From Raxaul to Bhimphedi one travels merely through jungle, slowly it is true, rising at Bhimphedi to an approximate height of 2600 feet. Here Indian methods of transport are quite put in the shade. My luggage, brought in on elephants, was immediately taken charge of by officials, who gave me a receipt, saying the luggage would go with me and that I was to pay in Nepal



RATT BAHADUR REGIMENT MARCHING PAST.



GOORKHA SOLDIERS SHOWING HEAD-DRESS.



SENTRY AT CHISSAGARIH.

according to weight, which I did two days later without any trouble at all, although the porters had been changed on the road. This is something like organisation. I was so elated that I challenged a local porter, who was to carry my change of clothes up to the bungalow of Chissa Garhi, 2500 feet straight above, to a race. He beat me very easily, but waited for me on his arrival. When, very hot and much winded, I reached the top of the ascent, it was quite dark. I was challenged by a sentry in what seemed to me a rather curious manner. Finally he said, "Who are you?" I answered, "I am me." Possibly it was the grammar that upset him, but he became very angry and said, "Tell me at once who you are." I answered, "God made me like you." He got very angry and shouted out to the commander of the guard, "Here is a man who says that God made him, and that is all he will say; what shall I do?" Upon which the whole guard-house turned out, and among them an officer, who had been warned that he was to expect me. He was much amused, and we laughed loud and long. The sentry was quite a smart youth. His photograph, which I took next day, may be seen on the opposite page.

The following day was to me the day of my life—more enjoyable and more interesting than any other that I have known, the change was so prodigious.

On my first arrival in Bombay as a very young subaltern from England, enthusiasm was tempered with doubt and discomfort. But neither of these two elements appeared here. All unconscious of what was before me, or rather my Goorkha orderly who had come with me from my regiment and myself, we climbed up a steep path to the top of the pass above Chissa Garhi. To me the wide view was gorgeous, but what impressed me even more was that we had left India altogether. Below us was a clear deep river, a real hill stream, Highland or Welsh, fringed with cottages and cultivated land, everything quite different from anything to be seen in India or the North-West Frontier Province, in the care and industry shown in its well-ordered agriculture. I felt that I had left the wilderness of Bengal for a really understanding community.

I was walking, which is not a usual practice in that country, for I am afraid the upper classes have no physical activity. I passed many Newars, merchants possibly, being carried down asleep, most of them in slung hammocks carried by two men. The rest looked with the contempt of the lazy and hopelessly impossible Eastern on a European who could demean himself so far as to walk when he could be carried. These were invariably Newars, the great trading class of

Nepal, a fine race and a jovial, but bitten with that horrible idea, which came from the Indian Continent, that the greater one becomes the less one ought to do.

What chiefly struck me was the well-being of the people on the way, the excellence, compared to India, of the houses, the care for agriculture, and the finish and general comfort compared to any part of India that I have seen. I passed a morning of real bliss, and finally got to Chitlung. This village, which I afterwards realised as being a half-way stage between the real Nepal and the plains of India, was most interesting; we were more or less up in the hills; but here again the fields, with their borders all neatly trimmed, showed a knowledge of real agriculture. There was comfort and food for even me, ceremonially an outcast, whenever I wanted it. Not only that, but I gathered a number of villagers together, we ordered the local beer, and I had a good talk with them. They were very amusing and humorous and very contented; glad to see me, but quite happy with their own people.

Above Chitlung is the Chitlung Pass, roughly 7200 feet above the sea. I was met on the way by Major Manners Smith, who took me to a point some 300 feet above the pass from which the whole range of the Himalaya was seen. On my left

soared my old friend of many songs sung in my regiment, no less than Dhaula Giri; and next to him Machha Puchri (the fish's tail), another old friend by repute. Then followed point after point, unknown to me, stretching right away to the far Eastern distance, where I could make out the Gaurishankar group; but please mark this, all controversial geographers, no sign of Everest, or of Makalu, of both of which much more anon.

From the Chitlung Pass, an original and most sensibly paved road descended very steeply to Tankote. It is delightfully steep to run down, very unpleasant to be carried down, and still more unpleasant to ride down. Still it is a sensible road, or at least it would be if it were kept in good repair. But do not let us leave the top of the pass for a moment. The view of the Nepal Valley is quite unmatched: Kashmir has nothing so fine to show. Gorgeous as the Kashmir views are, notably from the Nagmarg across the Wular Lake, there is nothing so suggestive or containing such strong contrasts as the views of the Chitlung Pass overlooking the Nepal Valley. The whole range of the main Himalaya looks down on this broken-up valley, prodigiously terraced and cultivated, Chinese in character, evidently civilised in a way the Kashmiri could not imagine, and that is the dominant note of what one sees. India is left,

another civilisation is reached, and a fresh train of thought and imagination set in motion.

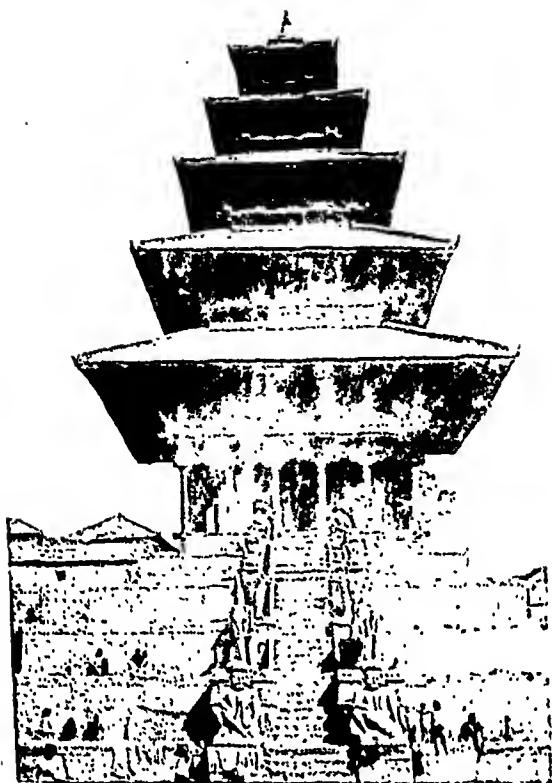
Arrived at the bottom of the pass, another awful contrast awaited me, in the shape of a phaeton, with india-rubber tyres and water cools. Meanwhile, in order to get my balance again, I bathed in a hill stream. Having changed and had tea, or what is known as tea in the East—it sparkles in a glass—away we went through further scenes of immense interest, especially to the dweller in the squalid Punjab. Passing men and women smiled upon us with friendly faces, nowhere was there any trace of purdah or false shame, and on all sides industry was in evidence, the natives generally giving one the idea that they were busy about something, a very unusual experience in the East.

The ordinary old Indian cannot imagine such trim gardens, such an appearance of general finish, and such well-kept gateways and roads as are to be seen throughout Nepal, as a characteristic of ordinary Indian life. It should be understood that the Nepalese themselves, when referring to Nepal, mean the actual Nepal Valley, which comprises the plains surrounding the city of Khatmandu, in which are the ancient towns of Patan and Bhatgaon, besides several other large villages, one or two of which almost arrive at the dignity of towns.

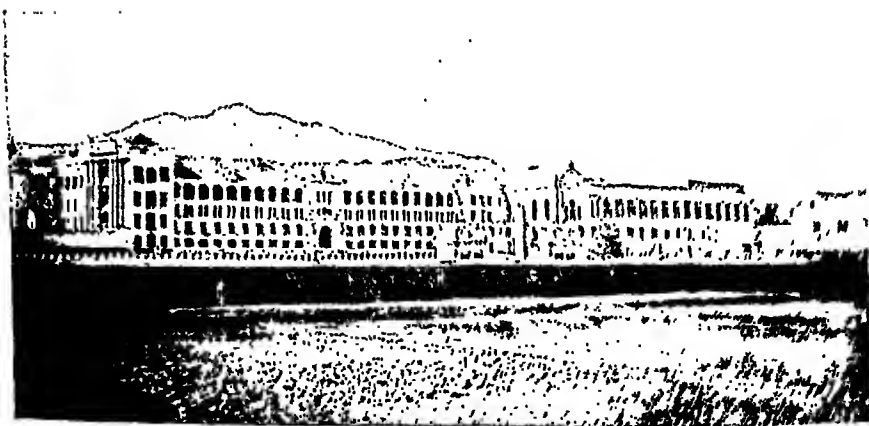
Inhabitants of other parts of the Nepal kingdom would almost invariably, if asked where they came from, name the district in which their village is situated, the reason for this being that historically the only part of the Nepal kingdom which can lay claim to the name is the actual valley which was the home of the Newars. The owners of the valley before this were conquered by the King of Goorkha and his followers some two hundred years ago, and to this day the greater number of the present inhabitants are of the Newar race.

After six miles of a most interesting and picturesque drive, we arrived at the Residency, a modern villa, prettily built, its immediate surroundings being curiously English in character, and very pleasant to meet with. A few days later I actually shot a woodcock in the grounds.

The next day being Christmas Day, there were great festivities, and an enormous presentation of fruit, game, etc., from all parts of the Nepal Dominions arrived with the Prime Minister's compliments. In the afternoon there was a garden party, which was honoured by the presence of the Maharajah Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jang Rana Bahadur, Hereditary Prime Minister of Nepal; several of his sons, the Commander-in-Chief, and many other notables, and we spent a most pleasant afternoon.



TEMPLE IN BHUTGAON.



PALACE OF MAHARAJA ADHIRA.

Nepal is nominally ruled by the Maharaj Adhiraj Prithwi Bilbikram Sah, and really by the Hereditary Prime Minister, Maharajah Sir Chandra Sham Sher, who is the son of Maharajah Bir Sham Sher, and a direct descendant of the famous Sir Jang Bahadur of Mutiny fame. The Prime Minister is assisted in governing the country by a Council or Durbar of Ministers, who are the heads of departments, with the curious exception of the Commander-in-Chief, who does not directly command the army, but has a great number of civil powers into the bargain, the real Commander-in-Chief being known as the "Jangi Lat" or "Fighting Lord," as indeed is our own Commander-in-Chief in India.

Most of the higher officials can talk excellent English—in fact, some of them with so little accent as to make it very difficult to distinguish them from English people. They have nearly all learnt in Nepal itself, where they have an excellent English school. A surprising fact about them is that they are excellent military historians. All that is military has for the Nepalese a great

upper classes, to the very great detriment of the actual training of their army itself. I believe, however, that an excellent example is being set in the very highest quarters, so that in a few years a different standard may be set up.

It is unfortunate that few of the upper classes have sporting tastes. None play polo, for instance, and few, if any of them, care for any form of sport, with the exception of the annual great winter tiger shoots that take place in the Nepal Terai on the Indian border. This is a curious fact, as all Goorkha soldiers in Goorkha regiments in the British service delight in all forms of sport, fishing, and shooting. Certainly most of the small game shooting in and about the Nepal Valley entails a considerable amount of hard work, either up and down hill or through deep bog and wet. During my stay there we had some delightful rough days after snipe in the low lands, and peafowl, kallidge pheasant, and woodcock in the low hills round the valley, notably one at the Maharajah's preserves at Gow Karan, a most charming tract of low, wooded hills, divided by boggy glades, which might almost have been in Wales or the Scotch borderland. A high rocketing peacock taken crossing from one hill to the next comes down a most satisfactory "*wump*."

But, after all, what interested me most, and

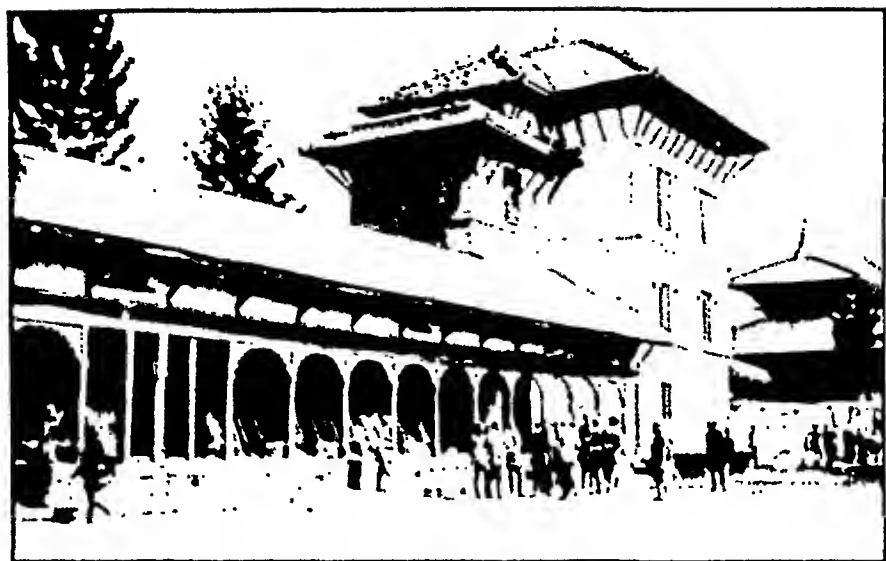
what I had been greatly looking forward to, was to see the actual Nepalese regiments in their own country. Khatmandu, Patan, and Bhatgaon have each a considerable number of troops quartered in them—especially Khatmandu, the headquarters of the army. The great parade ground at Khatmandu is probably one of the finest in the East, and is situated in the middle of the city. It has the barracks and old city on its west, the beautiful tank and clock-tower of the Rani Pohkri on its north, and the great Durbar Office or residences of nobles on its eastern side. It is large enough to allow at least a dozen battalions and half-a-dozen mountain batteries to drill on it at once. It must be a fine sight when a great ceremonial parade is held. I believe they are able to mass 30,000 troops on it, and that they are handled without confusion. I was unlucky in missing one of these great parades, which had been arranged for the visit of Mr. Hobhouse, M.P., Under Secretary of State, who was then travelling in India, but I saw what interested me a good deal more—the ordinary everyday parades and drills.

It is a curious army, probably the most remarkable of its kind in the world. It is continually being drilled in archaic manœuvres, which, with the exception of the battalion marching movements, it always executes rather badly. But when

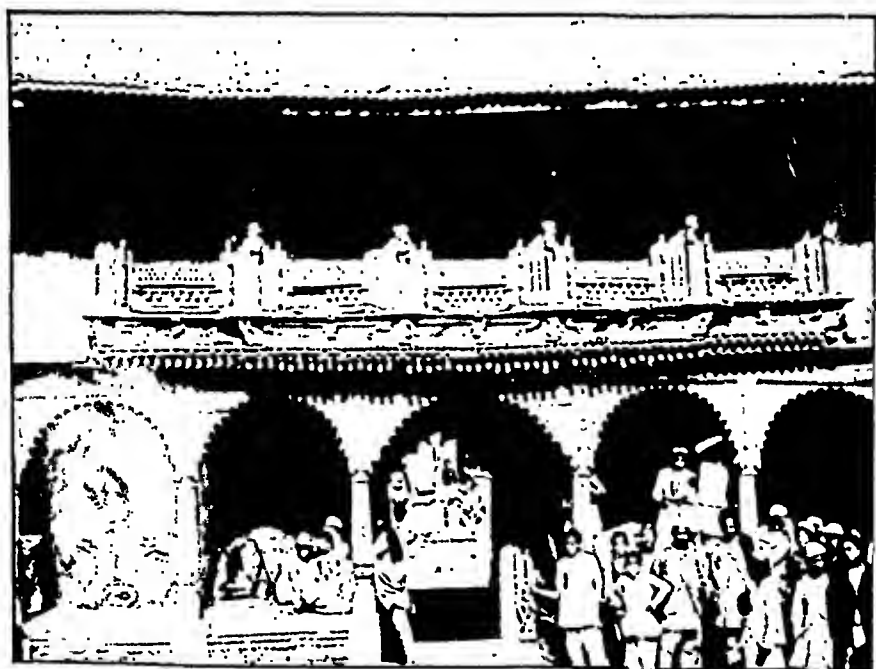
the battalions are on the move, marching either in masses or as on the line of route, they perform very well. The men are physically excellent, though badly set up and equipped archaically, and armed with what apparently is the old Brown Bess—very old indeed, and apparently never cleaned; yet the regiments have many of them historic names, have an excellent pride in themselves, and an excellent *esprit de corps*; in fact, the army is an army, in my opinion, and only requires a modern standard of training and arms to be a most formidable force. It is in all senses a regular army, by which I mean an army with national ideals and a sense of responsibility.

I believe now that a few Martini rifles have been sent by the Indian Government, and that the troops are getting some much-needed musketry training. I am writing of the troops as they are, and not as I am quite sure the authorities would like them to be. Keeping up to the times in the matter of re-armament is a terrible trial, even to rich European Governments, and is quite beyond the means of a comparatively small Mountain State.

The natural military head-dress is original in its way, and consists of a cap of dark cotton material with a swathed brim, on which are laid several bands of silver lace, with a plaque of silver in front



OLD DUTTAL AND GUARD HOUSE, KHATMANDU



CARVED BALCONY, KHATMANDU.

stamped with the badge of each regiment. This head-dress is called a *chāp tōra*, and differs in value according to the rank of the wearer, those of the higher ranks being mounted with gold, as may be seen in the illustration facing page 6. This head-dress would be a dreadful handicap in war, as it flashes in the sun and would render the movement of even very small bodies of troops visible from an enormous distance.

I believe I am correct in saying that the Newar race, the original owners of the Nepal Valley, are not enlisted in the combatant ranks of the army, or at least not in any numbers. This seems strange, as they fought splendidly and for long against the Goorkha kings, and for a great number of years quite held their own against all comers. They are the main representatives of the industrial part of the country. All the wonderful temples, brass work, and carving as seen in the big towns are due to them. Their houses are easily distinguished from the Goorkha houses, by their superior character. Further, Newars have always preferred to live in towns and villages. One very seldom sees Newar houses scattered about as is the case with the Goorkha houses. They are also now the great merchants of the country, most of the trade being in their hands.

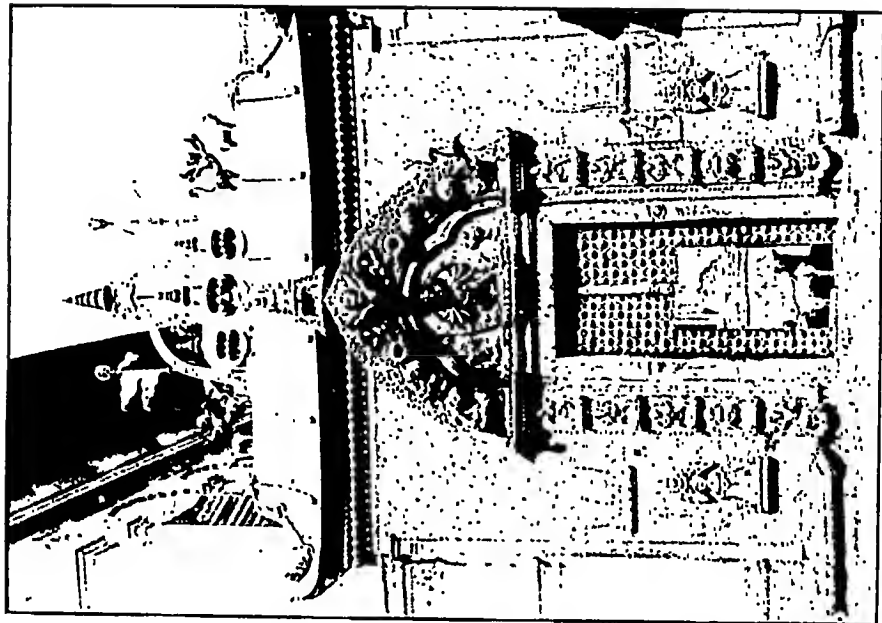
I spent several days in being taken round the

three great cities, Khatmandu, Patan, and Bhatgaon, in which are situated most of the old temples and palaces of the Newar kings. Few Nepalese recognise the name Khatmandu as the capital of Nepal: Khatmandu or Khāt Manru (the wooden temple) was one of the oldest Newar temples and gave its name to the town that grew up round it. The capital of the country is simply known as Nepal and nothing else, as I have before stated. What may be called the ecclesiastical architecture shows distinct Chinese influence; in fact, I only saw two temples purely Hindu in the character of their architecture, namely, the temple of Narayan and that of Bhimsen in Patan.

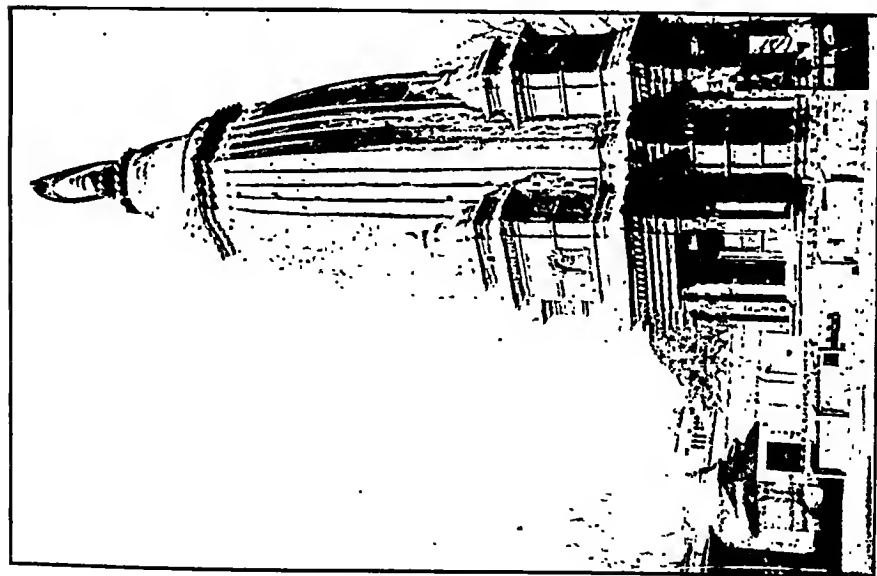
Bhatgaon and Patan are a mass of temples. But the most striking object to me was the great brass gateway of the old palace in Bhatgaon, of which the illustrations opposite will give some idea. The doorway is of bronze, and the exterior ornamentation of beaten and cast brass. Opposite the gateway, on a pedestal, is a figure, with a brass umbrella held over it, of one of the old Newar kings of Bhatgaon.

It would possibly be as well to explain here, as shortly as such a very complicated subject will allow, the racial constitution of the kingdom of Nepal.

The governing class nominally belong to the



BRASS GATEWAY IN BILATGAON.



TEMPLE OF NARAYAN, KHATMANDU.

great Hindu Kshettriya caste, but all show distinct signs of Mongolian descent. Seeing that Hinduism is a non-proselytising religion, how did this arise? In old days the whole part of the Himalaya now included in the kingdom of Nepal was occupied by different races of evident Mongolian descent; some of undoubtedly high culture, who probably all belonged to the Newar races. The different Mohammedan invasions of India, and their conquests of old Rajput states, which covered different long periods of time, caused many of the conquered or irreconcilables to fly to any part where they could be safe from Mohammedan tyranny. Many came to Nepal. Then they intermarried with the hill tribes, and gave their offspring their own caste—really as a matter of self-defence, since, from an orthodox Hindu point of view, it is impossible to hand on the caste to the child of a no-caste wife.

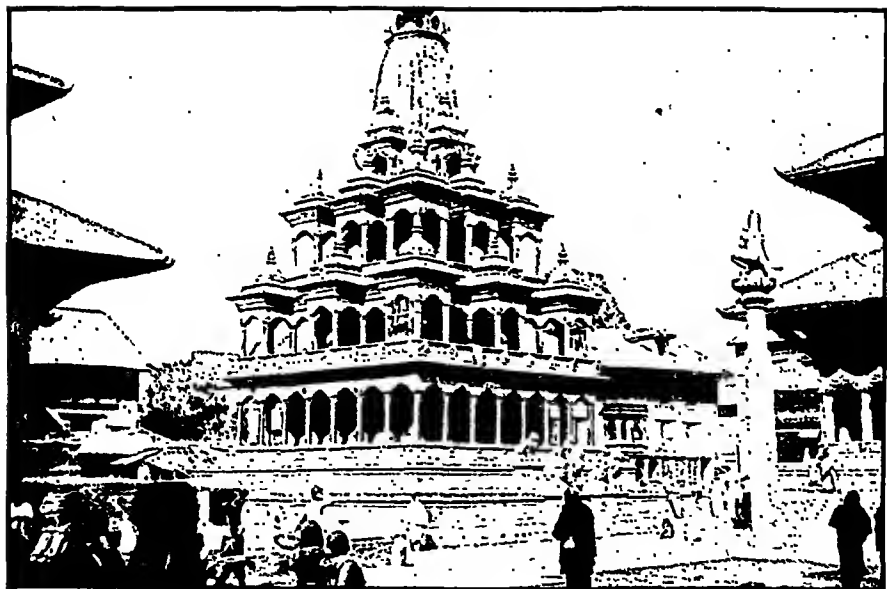
As these fugitive Rajputs, Brahmans, etc., brought South Indian education and culture into Nepal, then probably quite barbaric, it is very easy to see how they not only very soon became the most influential people in the different Hill States in which they sought refuge, but also impressed the Hindu religion on all with whom they were brought directly in contact.

At this period Buddhism was undoubtedly the religion of the Newars of the Nepal Valley. What

was the religion of the surrounding hill tribes is doubtful, though it was certainly not original Buddhism, but probably a leaven of original Buddhism mixed up with innumerable old superstitions, very much as is the case with the present Hinduism of the same people. . . .

At the present day the inhabitants of Nepal are most mixed ; though, as I said, they all show signs of Mongolian descent. But this is probably less generally seen among the upper classes, certain of whom intermarry with well-born natives of the Indian Continent.

The entire government of the country is in the hands of the Kshettriya class, to which the Maharaj Adhiraj and the Maharajah Sir Chandra Sham Sher both belong. So much is this the case, that I very much doubt (even in class regiments) whether a representative of one of the pure Mongolian tribes can rise to the rank of colonel, or is given any really responsible civil billet ; not because they have not the necessary ability, but because there are not enough places for the ruling class itself, while it is also considered politically wise not to encourage them beyond a certain point. The Kshettriya class are not only the governing class, but also supply the greater number of soldiers in Nepal, although other of the military clans are fully enlisted, and are even formed into class regiments,



TEMPLE OF BHIM SEN.



THE HANUMAN DHOKA, KATHMANDU.



that is, regiments enlisted entirely from men of one tribe. In this connection the photograph of the Kalibahadur Regiment is worth looking at.

The inhabitants of Nepal may very roughly be classified as follows :—

(1) Brahman clans ; priestly caste.

Kshettriya clans, who are the governing class.

Mongolian military clans, such as the Maggar, Gurung, Sunwar, Rai, and Limbu clans.

Numerous inferior or purely pastoral clans : such as the Rohani, Thakali, Tamang (also called Murmi or Lamas), Tamé, and others.

The menial classes : leather workers, tailors, iron workers, musicians, etc., all of whom are still included as Goorkhalis.

(2) The Newars.

(3) The different hill tribes, such as Humla Jumla people and Dhotialis in the west, who are not Goorkhalis.

(4) The low-lying jungle tribes, Tarus, etc., who live in the Nepal Terai.

(5) The Thibetan tribes of the higher mountains, classed as Nepalese subjects, such as the Sherpa Bhotias.

CHAPTER II

NEPAL AND SIKHIM (*continued*)

THE studied isolation of Nepal, which allows no European to travel in the country except by special leave by the one main route to the capital itself, is a political move, and from whatever cause arising, which need not be discussed here, is, I go so far as to say, of distinct advantage to us, since it keeps a simple people removed from modern influences. Whatever effect it may have in the modernising of the country, still, I believe, it is a distinct factor in the general happiness of the people. The privileged visitor to Nepal is allowed a certain amount of freedom of movement within prescribed limits, and although these limits contain all there is of interest in Nepal proper, a tour that I made round the edge of these limits filled me with a hungry desire to explore further.

An easy afternoon's ride north from the Residency brings one to the Hills of Kakani, in which is situated the Resident's hot weather retreat, from which a most gorgeous view of the whole main



GIRLS OF THE GURUNG TRIBE.



A RAI EASTERN NEPAL.



A LIMBU EASTERN NEPAL.

Himalaya range is obtained. This house is on a ridge about 7400 feet above the sea, and looks down on distant Nawakote and the valley of the Trisuli, both of which names I had been well acquainted with for years. I was very much struck with the hill agriculture, as far as I could see it, on the surrounding hills, the terracing being excellent and the fields evidently kept in excellent order. The most remarkable fact seemed to me the general want of animals, either for ploughing or for transport purposes. Even in the valley, which is, so to speak, cultivated to within an inch of its life, mostly by Newar villagers, I saw nothing but manual labour. Of course, owing to the want of good roads leading to India, wheeled carriages are, except on the main road, unknown, but baggage animals are also few and very far between, nearly the whole of the trade exports and imports from all directions being carried on men's backs; in fact, every one seems to carry—men, women, and children. The amounts they take when they are conveying the produce of their fields to market or to the towns of Nepal proper are prodigious. 100 to 140 lbs. is quite an ordinary load, and I once attempted to measure the weight of loads that I put down as nearer 400 lbs. than 300 lbs.

My route took me east from Kakani, crossing

the very distinguishable point which lies due north of Nepal about 8500 feet above the sea, from whence an excellent view should have been obtained of the great range if it had not been for the thickness of the jungle. We marched through pleasant jungle paths, till we arrived at night at a Government shooting-box. These Government shooting-boxes are not very often used, it appeared to me, though this one was very well situated in a wooded valley about a mile above the Government water-works for the supply of the valley, for the whole valley has an excellent water-supply with pipes laid on everywhere, the work of local Nepalese engineers.

The following day's march took me through the eastern end of the valley of Nepal to the Maharajah's summer residence at Nagarkote, situated on a hill about 6300 feet above the sea, with a great view of the eastern ranges. It is an excellent little station with very well built and comfortable houses, but rather of the stucco villa style of architecture. From here we were able to make out the point of Everest appearing between the shoulders of two other mountains, whose names I was unable to discover; and we also had a very fine view of the Gauri Sankar group more to the north.

The continual confusion and uncertainty that

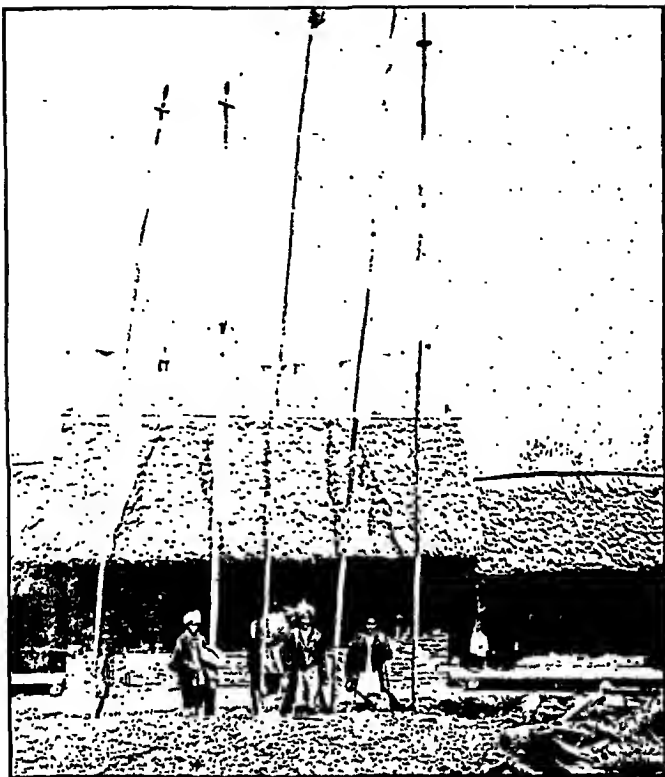
have existed for so long concerning the real local name of Everest have, I think, been finally set at rest by Surveyor Nathu Sing, who was allowed to make a journey in 1907 for surveying purposes to the head-waters of the Dudh Kosi river. He says that Everest is known in the Dudh Kosi Valley as Chomo Lungmo; this name was also given me by some Sherpa Bhottias whom I employed in April and May 1909, and whose home was at Dhimbujé village, one of the highest villages on the Dudh Kosi river. They further gave me the name Kamalung for Makalu, not recognising the latter name at all; the mistake seems natural, as the two names seem to be the same word with the letters differently placed, and may be easily made by a man not acquainted with any Thibetan language, as the sound is very much the same. It is possible that the name obtained by Colonel Waddell, I.M.S., for Everest is also used by Thibetans, but I failed to find any one who had heard of it.

Since the report of Captain Woods, R.E., on the Nepal Himalaya, the question of the identity of the Gauri Sankar group has been finally settled. The Gauri Sankar group is very striking as seen from Nagarkote, but is inferior in every way to the Everest group; the *massif* of Gauri Sankar culminates in a point of only 23,000 odd feet.

Here, or rather on the way, I joined Major

Manners Smith, and through the kindness of the Maharajah we were allowed next day to descend into the Banepa Valley, stopping at the village of that name, a most interesting walk into another cultivated valley. On our descent into the valley we joined the main road which goes to Eastern Nepal and up to the Sikhim frontier, quite fit for riding or pack transport, but not large enough for wheeled vehicles. Banepa itself is a large Newar village. In it were a great number of wild pigeons, who feed as much in the village as in the fields; we made quite a bag of them, much to the amusement of the villagers, who scrambled for the empty cartridge cases. Our return journey to Nepal led us over a small col down to the most interesting town of Bhatgaon, where, besides getting many photographs of the temples and other buildings, I was lucky enough to find some regiments just waiting to fall in for their morning parade on the very fine parade ground, and had some amusement with the men. From here there is a carriage-road back to the Residency, and Major Manners Smith's phaeton was in waiting.

My tour was short, but of surprising interest. The views I obtained of what is quite untravelled country naturally made me more anxious than ever to continue, but after the set-back that our attempts during the year 1907 had received from



A PUBLIC HOUSE, SIKKIM.



LEPCHA MAN, SIKKIM.



THE CHIMSERA LAMA, SIKKIM.

the India Office regarding an exploration of the Everest group to be carried out *via* Upper Sikhim and through a corner of Thibet, I did not feel very sanguine of interesting the Nepalese authorities in this matter. However, I found that Major Manners Smith had already done so to a great extent, and that the Prime Minister was himself quite hopeful that a way would be found to explore Everest from the Nepal side; he even talked of a mixed Anglo-Nepalese exploration. However, he is not an autocrat, and has, I believe, often considerable difficulty in combating the natural jealousy with which the upper classes in Nepal regard the idea of the intrusion of Englishmen and other European foreigners into any part of that kingdom. This being the case, although the Viceroy of India himself actually considered the possibility of Everest being explored from the Nepal side, and although in 1909 the Nepal Durbar suggested a short and rapid dash from the district which lies north of Mozufferpore in Bengal, through an eastern Nepalese city, Hanuman Nagar by name, direct to the foot of Everest, and complete preparations were made for such an expedition, it was at the last moment adjudged to be inexpedient and had to be abandoned.

No more exciting journey could have been taken, nor is there in any part of the great Himalaya

range such a promising region as the whole of the Nepal kingdom for the organisation of exploring and mountaineering expeditions. The lower valleys are thickly populated, grain can be easily purchased, and in the upper valleys are everywhere sheep and half-bred yaks. The peasants of the upper valley are mostly Sherpa Thibetans; in fact, a good many of the porters employed by Messrs. Rubenson and Monrad Aas were Sherpas from the actual Dudh Kosi, a branch of the great Kosi river, which rises in the lower slopes of Everest itself. All the higher valleys have excellent porter material, but the clothing of the different districts varies considerably. The Goorkhas of the higher parts are suitably clothed for their own business, but not by any means arrayed with a view to spending many days in the snows. The Bhutias (Thibetans) are generally much better fitted out in this respect, and have besides a great power of resistance to cold.

Nepal itself, for an extremely mountainous country, is very thickly populated. So much is this the case, that at least 40,000 Goorkhas have overflowed from the eastern provinces into our district of Darjeeling and into semi-independent Sikkim, and immigrants continue to come into the latter district. In Sikkim, in the western portion, the Goorkhas completely

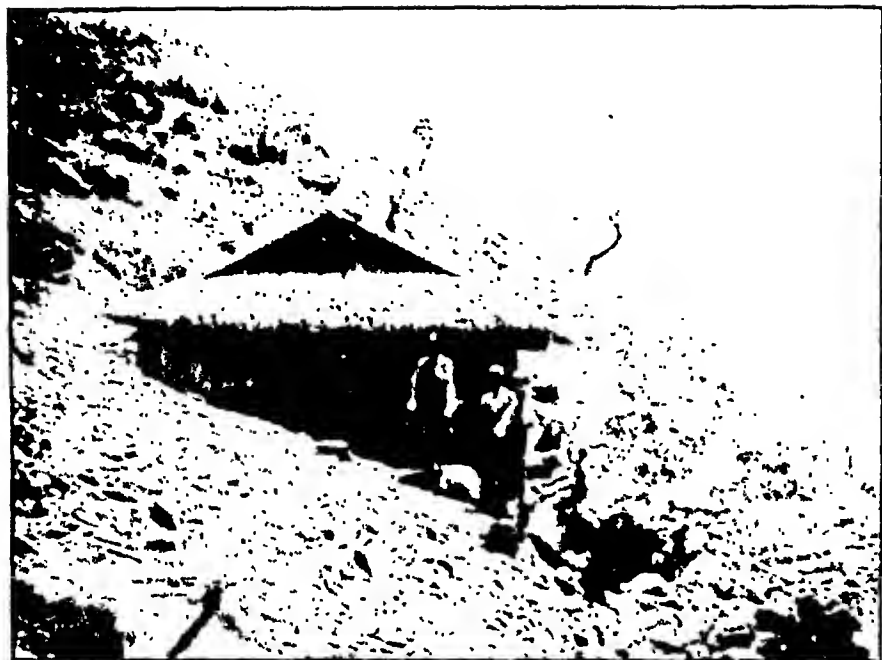
outnumber the original Lepcha inhabitants as well as the now dominant Thibetans, although they really take little, if any, part in the governing of the country. This means that all the district officials are Thibetans, as is natural when one considers that the semi-independent Raja of Sikhim is a Thibetan himself. Still, nearly the whole of the agriculture of the district is in Nepalese hands.

I cannot congratulate them on the way they have taken up their new lands there, nor on their treatment of the land, still less can I congratulate the authorities who control their actions. If Nepal is well cultivated, and if the hill-sides are well and economically treated, so in contrast is the condition of Sikhim a crying shame. It is situated in a kind of sleeve formed by mountain ridges and headed by the great Kinchenjunga group, it possesses one of the most humid climates in the whole Himalayas, and is fine and wonderful, but generally unpleasant. Up to a certain altitude it produces fine crops—but this is how immigrants treat the hill-side; they have one, and only one, idea—burn, burn, burn. I never saw a terraced area; corn is grown on newly burned ground, without labour or difficulty. This waste is awful, not only of timber but of soil, and the results, when this system has con-

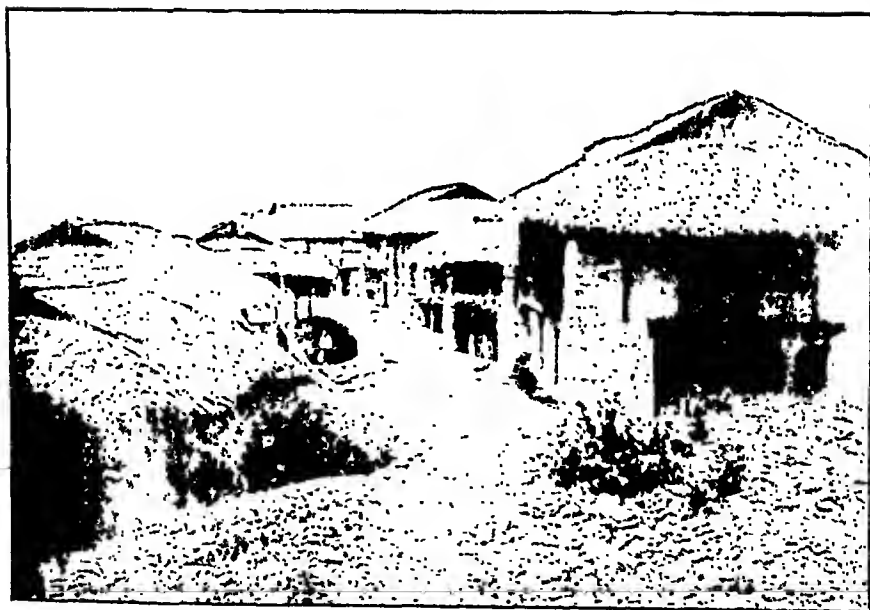
tinued for some time, is not only a waste of most valuable forest, but that the hill-sides are actually falling down, slipping into the valleys in fact. I consider the authorities are themselves responsible for this condition.

Colonists always want quick returns with little labour, but why is a country, from which fine agricultural results might have been expected, allowed to be so ruined? Putting aside this consideration, travelling in Sikhim, when the weather is at all propitious, is delightful. To the mountaineer, no district offers so many chances, not only of really good mountain exploration, but also of obtaining that most irritating and annoying thing, a record. It is an expensive district, and supplies are supposed to be difficult to obtain. During a journey into the snows this year (1909), I found the former true, but the latter much exaggerated. I found among the villagers men who were perfectly ready to contract to supply me with ample grain, butter, and sheep at by no means an exorbitant rate, at the high alp of Jongri, and was able thereby to cut down to a great extent my caravan from Darjeeling.

My journey was, however, an undoubted failure, undertaken with the hopes of finding settled weather for the two months before the monsoon was expected, and also as a solace for my disappoint-



LIMBU HOUSE WITH BURNT HILLSIDE.



LIMBU VILLAGE OF TINGLING.

ment over the projected expedition to the Everest group. I arrived in Darjeeling at the end of a most extraordinary drought. The tropical forest through which the railway runs was this year (1909) in April an unpicturesque dusty scrub, the hill-sides almost shut out by the smoke from the innumerable forest fires, which had done immense harm both to Government forest property and to animal life; indeed quite a number of shepherds as well as animals lost their lives in the higher jungle.

I had no sooner arrived in Darjeeling than the weather broke. With the help of Mr. R. de Righi, who is always ready to assist any traveller to the upper ranges, my little caravan took but two days to organise. We journeyed by the usual way to Jongri (see Mr. Freshfield's book¹ on the Himalayas), but I think I got much more fun out of that journey than the ordinary traveller. Sikhim travel is always fascinating, if one does not mind the continual ascents and descents. On the direct road to Jongri the ascents alone amount to 26,000 feet, in what ought to be six not very severe marches. We took nine days over it, as we visited neighbouring Buddhist monasteries—for Buddhism is here the religion of the ruling race—and waited at other places to make arrangements for supplies.

¹ *Round Kangchenjunga*. By D. W. Freshfield. London, Edward Arnold. 18s. net.

The road leads us past the Monastery of Pamionche, a large building, newly built and unfortunately supplied with a tin roof, most unsightly and out of place. Below Pamionche is a small bazaar, by name Gesing, where we stopped to be present at the weekly market and had a most amusing time. Natives of all kinds arrived, Nepalese, Bhutias, and the aboriginal Lepcha; the latter a gentle, good-looking, and most friendly people, most attractive in manner but without much character. They are rapidly disappearing, I believe, merging into the Thibetan type through intermarriage. Every one seemed most cheerful and friendly, and freely partook of the local good cheer at the local public-house or "Gadi"; towards evening things got very lively, and we were much amused at a quarrel between a Nepalese, a Gurung by tribe, and the local tailor, a Damai, one of the low menial Nepalese castes. Finally the tailor called the Gurung "a pig." There was a prodigious row, every one joined in and urged them on, but prevented them from getting together on purpose; and every one pretended to side with one or the other and to get equally angry, and then retired to laugh. Meanwhile the two principals got perfectly wild. They were not allowed to get close, but were still urged on more and more. Finally a Thibetan, evidently of some standing, jumped into the ring

that had been formed and patted the Gurung on the back : " Never you mind," said he, " he does not mean to insult you, he is only calling you after his pet pig that he is so fond of. He wanted to be kind." Every one howled with laughter, and the Gurung was fairly beside himself. Suddenly a wild figure, more tipsy than the rest, sprang into the arena and beat every one all round with a stick violently for some minutes. Every one took this as a huge joke, but finally he too was hustled away. Everything ended in quite a friendly fashion after all, though this is not always the case by any means, as these hill tribes have the "*kurki*" or carved Nepalese knife always handy, and sometimes the sudden temptation to use it is too great.

Yoksum is the last permanent settlement in Sikhim on the Jongri route. Here we lived in the Kazi's house. Things have changed but little since the visit of Sir Joseph Hooker in the late 'forties of the last century, except, probably, that some more land has been taken up by the invading Nepalese. Thence to Jongri, a tiresome road and a tiresome jungle ; a two days' hard march, and unfortunately for us a damp one. The forest fires had extended even so far as these remote hill-sides, and we had very hard work cutting a way through fallen trees. The road in some places can hardly be distinguished at the best of times, at least this is true of the short

cut by which we were going, but when covered by trees fallen from above and in places still alight, it added considerably to the trouble of getting through. From the river bridge there is a direct ascent to Jongri of 6000 feet odd, through a jungle, which is, I believe, admired by some ; I personally loathed it ; still, though it was drenched, there were no leeches, or hardly any. Later on in the year it is alive with these horrid pests.

However interesting botanically a Sikhim forest may be to the scientist, to the ordinary traveller who is acquainted with the grand fir, oak, and chestnut forest of the Central and Western Himalayas, it is anathema. The men caught several of the large edible frog “*pāhā*,” which is supposed to be excellent medicine and very good to eat. Jongri on arrival held out all sorts of hope, the weather had actually partially cleared, that is, we could see where we were going ; the surroundings of Jongri under such conditions looked like a Scotch moor, or perhaps more like the rough country round the Rhinog group in Mid-Wales. Our road was very steep, and led us through drenching forest of *Mālinga* bamboo, some chestnut, and finally rhododendrons of all shapes and sizes, emerging through scrub rhododendrons on to the Upper Jongri moorland. The great mountains, though close at hand, remained invisible.

No sooner had we arrived there than the clouds descended, the wind blew, and the snow and sleet—chiefly sleet—drifted. The storm never stopped for four days and nights, with the exception of one morning just enough to tempt myself and Pahal Sing, one of my orderlies, to start out and see if we could learn something of our surroundings. After a lot of scrambling, we arrived at a height of 15,400 feet approximately, the weather having again descended, and then had to return drenched. After the fourth day we turned back, as it was impossible to get anything dry.

The two huts at Jongri I had given up to the porters, my own servants, and orderlies. My own Whymper tent, usually a good protection, was not good enough to keep the snow out, sleet being blown from every direction; nor were the huts any better; these are roughly built, and the sleet searched them through and through. So on the fourth day we beat a hasty retreat. We were obliged to dry our bedding, but this we did not accomplish, owing to the appalling weather, till our arrival in Yoksun, a day and a half later. However, the trip was quite enjoyable, made so chiefly by the cheerfulness both of the porters, Thibetans and Nepalese, and of the Goorkha orderlies. It seems to me that all the people of Mongolian descent make excellent weather during discomforts. We

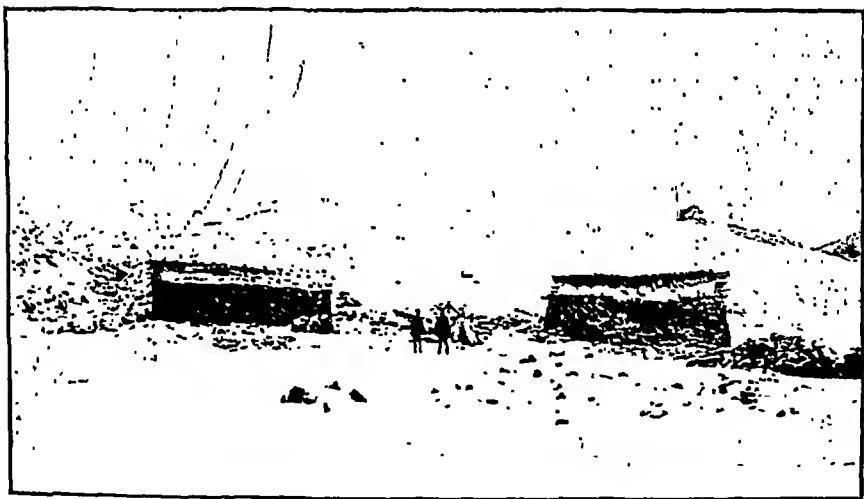
had no trouble with any one. Baltis, Kashmiris, and most others would have wanted to die. We had dances and other revels, and were generally uproarious.

Among Nepalese especially, this sense of fun is almost universal; amongst them real wit is occasionally found: humour is almost universal, and the people who fail in their dealings with them most are usually those much-to-be-pitied individuals who have not this sense. It goes through all ranks, from the Maharajah, the Prime Minister, down; and, I believe, the want of the recognition of this fact and of how it separates the Nepalese of Mongolian descent from the different races of the Indian Continent, of Aryan and Semitic descent, has caused a good deal of—what shall we say?—the want of cordial appreciation, or perhaps want of understanding between the two Governments.

But what glories are contained in this Himalayan region from the border of Kumaon to Bhootan; the last great piece of true exploration left in India proper. Think of Nepal and its great rivers, the Karnali, the Kali, the Tirsuli, the Tamba, Dudh, Sun Kosi, and the Arun Kosis. All unknown as far as Europeans are concerned. Think of the passes into Thibet, and the well-used and old-established trade routes; and, all mountaineers, think of 500 miles of absolutely virgin peaks, and a popula-



THE HOUSE OF THE KAZI OF YOKSUN.



JONGRI.



tion of probably more sporting instinct than the Swiss had one hundred years ago, and of the possibilities that this suggests! Think how glorious would be two or three years in this glorious country! Well, go on thinking! I have done it for years. We'll none of us get there. What's the good of weeping?

"*Dakkiglas* is the only word"—which was what a Welsh fishing gillie once said to a sporting parson, explaining that it was the same as "D—n," but not so wicked.

CHAPTER III

KUMAON AND GARHWAL

ON the western borders of Nepal lies the British district of Kumaon, and joined to it and overlapping its northern boundary the district of British Garhwal, the river Sarda fixing the boundary between Kumaon and the western districts of the Nepal kingdom. Lower Kumaon is a very charming district of sub-Himalayan hill country; the lowest slopes of these foot-hills abut on the plains of India, and many merge into the great Terai, or forest belt, which is almost continuous from the Duns of Dehra and Sirhind to the Brahmaputra. Indeed these foot-hills are clothed in sub-tropical jungle, which, though not so luxurious as in the more humid climate of the eastern Himalaya, are still very fine. The main routes from the plains into Kumaon lead either through the picturesque hill station of Naini Tal or still more directly to the old capital of Almora. The country is all interesting, and the people evidently well-to-do. Their villages and cottages,

though not particularly trim from a European standpoint, are generally neat and well-built and often very picturesquely situated; a pleasant, smiling country with an air of *bien être*, quite different from the really richer districts of Kashmir. In fact, the general cleanliness of the villages is rather exceptional for any part of the Himalaya. I wish one could say as much for the average Kumaoni peasant. As a rule he is a well-born Hindu, generally of Rajput or Brahman extraction. He has none of the virtues of the hillman in general; he is even of slight build and of poor physique, though active. In fact, they say that their women are often better carriers than the men. Numbers of them live half the year in the plains, where they own large herds of cattle, and come up to the hills only for the summer months. Their general character is like their general appearance and physique—mean and unattractive. It is a pity a better race does not own such a charming country.

My many trips through Lower Garhwal and the glorious views of the main Himalaya obtained from many points of vantage had determined me some day to travel in this most beautiful section of the Himalaya. Indeed, the views of the great peaks of Trissul, Nanda Devi, and Nandakot, with views stretching even into the Nepal Himalaya itself, as seen from Almora, or still better from the hill

station of Binsar, rival even the views from Darjeeling itself. There is nothing quite to compare to the great mass of Kinchenjanga as seen from Darjeeling, no view which gives one the sense of height and depth to such a degree, but the general *coup d'œil* in the Kumaon hills is nearly as impressive.

When staying with Mr. Alfred Williams, a veteran landscape painter, who at the age of seventy made a most successful artistic attack on the Himalaya, we often discussed the rival attractions of the Darjeeling district and the Kumaon Garhwal Mountains. He, himself an old and experienced mountaineer, used to urge me to arrange an expedition into the Trissul and Nanda Devi group, but I had no idea of such luck coming my way, as the district is situated so far from where my own unit lies in India that I did not expect ever to be able to see my way to it. However, after the disappointment of the projected expedition to Mount Everest in 1907, mentioned in the previous chapters (*vide* Mr. Mumm's book, *Five Months in the Himalaya*), both my companions, at Dr. Longstaff's suggestion, proposed continuing Dr. Longstaff's own remarkable exploration in these regions. It was a most charming prospect, and we had a most charming tour. The Viceroy, Lord Minto, who was himself inter-

ested in our previous plan, as a consolation for our disappointment helped us immensely by making the necessary arrangements for our trip with Sir John Hewitt, the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. For indeed a protracted expedition for mountaineering is quite a different thing from a shooting expedition. To begin with, we were six Europeans and nine Goorkhas, riflemen of my regiment (the 5th Goorkha Rifles), and in this poor, or rather let me say non-productive, district, such a number travelling together are hard to arrange for. Further, one has so many special stores and such a special outfit that to move us took no less than 160 porters. In well-populated Kumaon there was no particular difficulty, but in Garhwal, especially by the short cut that we took to the Dhaoli Valley, villages were few and far between.

Our journey through the heart of Kumaon, although it took place towards the end of April, when the weather was getting rather too warm, was most interesting. The country is charming, hilly and well-wooded, with wonderfully fertile valleys and very neat and well-kept cottages. The more I enjoyed this rich and attractive country, the more I regretted the Kumaoni inhabitants. Still, they have done their best to cultivate the land they live in. The villages and

houses are of their own construction, and they are undoubtedly clever people ; yet one cannot help feeling that perhaps another dose of Goorkha rule, from which they were relieved after the treaty of Segowlie, which terminated the Goorkha War of 1814-15-16, would do them a world of good. I speak feelingly.

Most delightfully were we entertained on our way, and I myself more than once by Mr. Norman Troup and Captain Troup at their estate of Kousanie. Mr. Troup probably knows more of the Garhwal shikar valleys than any sportsman of the present time. He and his brother, an old Mutiny veteran, gave us much useful information. The march beyond their estate brings one to the house of Mr. Nash, who was equally kind, and has also for years travelled in Garhwal, and knows the Garhwali character well and appreciates it. Gwaldam, Mr. Nash's estate, is situated high above the Pindari river, on the borders of Kumaon and Garhwal.

Once across the Pindari, one is in Garhwal and in another country. First it becomes immediately more mountainous, as it is on the southern slopes of the great Trissul-Nanda Devi group; and, further, it is inhabited by a different and much more simple people. But though much pleasanter, they are also less industrious. The

Kumaoni undoubtedly likes bettering himself, but these people are very primitive. They do not wish to become better off, but are satisfied with a sufficiency of food and clothing, and indeed they must be very easily satisfied, for even in the highest villages they were very badly clothed, and nowhere did the people look fat and well-liking, and that, too, in a country where Italian or Tyrolese or Swiss peasants would make a fine living, and one on which the peasants of the Dauphiné Alps would look as a land flowing with milk and honey.

To any one who has seen Hunza, in comparing Garhwal to other parts of the Himalaya or Hindu Koosh, the thought of famine in this district seems foolish. But everything runs to waste, especially grass. Water-cuts seem hardly employed anywhere (this, of course, is on our itinerary, *i.e.* *via* Pindari, Pana, Ramini, and the Kunari Pass to Tapoban), and the coarsest grains only are grown. There is no industry and no forethought. This seems to be the character of the Garhwali peasant. But, beyond these characteristics, he is a pleasure to meet compared with the Kumaoni. Simple, pleasant mountain folk, strong and enduring, though not of particularly good build or physique, their only drawback seemed to me that they were rather bigoted Hindus compared to Nepalese peasants.

Altogether during the time I was in Garhwal I

must have employed, for longer or shorter terms, over 1500 hillmen. They were mostly of Rajput extraction, but we had all castes, from Brahmans to the menial classes. Some were very full of ceremonial. One even went to the extent of washing the sticks he proposed to cook with before he lit the fire. They improved very much on acquaintance. Many of our permanent Beldars (men engaged for a term, as casual porters are engaged by the stage) turned out very well. As mountaineers, to help in a high climbing expedition, few are of much use. This is due, not to want of capacity by any means, but to want of clothing and food. Their clothes are wretched ; their blankets worse. They are in fact generally clothed in little more than a blanket, which does for day and night covering, and their legs and feet are bare. Their accustomed food is low forms of grain, a little milk, and less meat. In their own country, when they are out after game, or even working for their own benefit, they are accustomed to very difficult ground. One most extraordinary trait is that they appear to have no sporting instincts. Even men posing as shikaris were actually useless, though they could show the ground. In fact, we only met one man, Ram Sing by name, who could be classed with a third-rate Gilgit shikari or a second-rate Kashmiri. Their own methods of shikar are dread-

ful. They are wholesale poachers of the most hopeless kind. They often kill the tahr in winter in the following fashion. The tahr is a goat with a fine body and a poor head, but a wonderful climber. He lives in even more precipitous ground than the markhor of the west. Their method of killing him is as follows: Having driven the tahr into deep nullahs, with most precipitous sides, out of which there are certain well-known tahr runs, they proceed to cover these runs where the ground is most difficult with mats made of split bamboo, which have been previously well drenched in water. The result is, the mats freeze and become as slippery as glass. Then they frighten the herd and drive them over these mats, with the result that they are precipitated from the cliffs, and that the Garhwali picks up the remains—perhaps twelve baskets full. However, we cannot blame them for their primitive methods; any people who are hungry would do the same, especially as every available domestic goat or sheep is kept in Upper Garhwal for the salt and borax trade. They are, in fact, the transport animals of the district.

Kumaon and Garhwal have besides their own proper inhabitants a large class of so-called Bhutias, almost nomads (who are described in Mr. Sherring's book). They all have villages, in which they live during the summer months, but during the

winter and often in the summer they trade backwards and forwards between Thibet proper and the Plains. They are true Bhutias only in so far that they are of Thibetan extraction, and are probably a mixed race. They are curiously particular in caste matters in some ways and curiously lax in others. That they should have any caste prejudices at all is an anomaly, and only shows the extent to which they have become mixed with the Garhwalis, Kumaonis, and others with whom they have been brought in contact. The primitive words of their language, by which I mean such words as "fire, water," are equally understood from Baltistan to Bhotan by all people of Bhutia extraction, and both the Maggar and Guring Goorkha riflemen of my regiment who were with me could obtain what they wanted, where Hindustani was not understood, by using detached words of their own languages, though without constructing a sentence.

The group of the Himalaya comprised by the mountains of Trissul and Nanda Devi, with their numerous supporters, is almost unrivalled in many ways; in fact, this section of the Himalaya is, as Dr. Longstaff puts it, gigantically Alpine in character, with its prodigious mountains and the green and cultivated valleys and forest-clad slopes. There is nothing quite the same in the west.

where the valleys are green and the forest splendid. There the mountain scale is smaller. But here on the actual slopes of the great mountains one passes through all phases. It is Alpine, but crushed together and confined; infinitely deeper and infinitely steeper, but not so livable in by any means. Once across the Kuari Pass, one arrives at a transition stage, and half-a-dozen marches farther up the Dhaoli river one is in Thibet almost, or perhaps in the Karakoram, as far as scenery goes. I infinitely prefer the forest surroundings of the prodigious Trissul scenery to the desolation of the further ranges, wonderful though the ice-scape may be, though even then the Central Himalaya has no ice-scape to compare to the great glacier scenery of the Karakoram or Hindu Koosh.

Mr. Mumm's delightful book on our journey in Garhwal, entitled *Five Months in the Himalaya*,¹ gives an excellent account of our journey up to Tapoban, though, after all, this is a well-known track to many sportsmen. Our party consisted of Mr. A. L. Mumm, Dr. T. G. Longstaff, our guides the brothers Brocherel, Moritz Inderbinnen, and myself.

The view of the Kuari Pass is quite remarkable. It is impossible in the Himalaya to say that any

¹ *Five Months in the Himalaya*. By A. L. Mumm. Royal 8vo. London, Edward Arnold. 21s. net.

peak or pass has an unrivalled view; all that one can hope for is to have the power of really understanding them. Still, one can say with certainty that the view from the Kuari is very hard to beat. The great trouble in the old days of travel was that sportsmen and explorers had to trust to paint and pencil to illustrate their books. General McIntyre's delightful book on sport, *The Hindu Kôh*, is entirely illustrated by sketches which really convey very little of the true character of the mountains; this is impossible without the help of photography. Such a panorama as the view from the Kuari in Mr. Mumm's book gives a far better notion of the vastness and structure of the range than any casual drawing can possibly do.

It is very hard, when travelling in the valleys in this region, to take in the scale. In the west, in the great valleys of the Indus, or in Gilgit, the whole country is on a tremendous scale. In places the main valleys open out into great wide spaces, only to be closed in again by immense buttresses. The rivers are large. There is room for the formation of vast glaciers. When marching, one finds that a large shoulder of a mountain, which appeared quite near in the morning, is apparently just as far away at mid-day. But in Garhwal it is otherwise. Garhwal is, like the Gilgit district, crushed into half the space structurally, but with the lower slopes, or

rather the slopes affected by the annual rainfall and many snowfalls, well clothed in forest and undergrowth. Take, for instance, the Rishi Valley, up which one has to pass to attack Mount Trissul and the north side of Mount Nanda Devi. Anything more precipitous or broken cannot be imagined. The scale is Himalayan only (by which I mean, of course, the great system of Himalaya and Hindu Kooch). It is a hopeless valley. In the Hindu Kooch it would be the abomination of desolation. Here, wherever a tree can grow, there is one. The birch forest is very fine, and in places there is quite a respectable amount of fir and pine. Even on the one or two tiny alps there is sufficient grass to make it worth while driving flocks on to them for short periods. For those who are fond of sport, mixed with rock-climbing of a very high order, the Rishi would be an excellent headquarters for tahr shooting, and there are also a great number of small burchel, though large heads appear to be very few and far between. There are two good routes into the Rishi, suitable for local porters—one by Tolma *via* Tolma Kharakh, and one from the Dunagiri Valley descending direct on to Dibrugheta, the last alp in the valley.

Our first attempt to get into the Rishi was foiled by the unusual amount of snow for the time of year (May 12th), and therefore we spent the

with the one blanket that they carried with them as their only coverlet, but not at such a height nor so early in the year. I have also been on expeditions in which our numerous coolies slept packed together in a tent with no more cover, and lived on the lightest food: but such exposure would take it out of the strongest and best-nourished man. I believe there have been several criticisms on the local men by Europeans and other travellers, who have been hurt and disappointed because the natives failed them after several days of this sort of thing, although, as they said, "we provided them with tents." In fact when I creep into my Mummery tent and take my boots off and pull on a pair of special long sleeping-socks over my dry stockings, and put on a dry shirt and pull down my Balaclava cap, and then creep into my swan's-down sleeping-bag, and finally have a nice hot pull out of my thermos bottle, I have often wondered myself why the coolies should complain of feeling unwell in the morning.

Anyhow, on this occasion we had to carry everything for ourselves—everything meaning food, clothing, sleeping-bags, rifles, and cartridges, all for ten days, also crampons. Mr. Mumm has given a very good description of the crossing of the Bagini Pass, but he did not, I think, quite sufficiently explain to mountaineers how very favourable the



DUNAGIRI FROM THE BAGINI PASS.



KAMET.

notwithstanding the very low night temperature, we each had a hot drink in the morning. It would have been most trying to have started without something warm; even as it was, the height and the cold sucked the heat out of us to such an extent that we all had to stop after about an hour and a half's walking over easy snow slopes, which were in absolutely perfect condition, to try and get some circulation back into our toes. Even the Brocherels suffered, but the Goorkhas, who had only ordinary ammunition boots and socks, were very cold, and it was here that Subadar Karbir Burathoki began his frost-bites. There had been no time to boot the Goorkhas sufficiently well, and the ammunition boot (price about seven shillings), though it is passably good for military purposes, gives nowhere near enough protection for high mountaineering. The boot, in some form, is a necessity. All forms of native foot-gear, excellently adapted as they are for shikar purposes, are quite inadequate for mountaineering. The Kashmiri grass shoe is excellent in its way, but I have worn out as many as three pairs in one day, over rocky and stony ground, and it is distinctly bad in steep, hard snow, and on ice quite useless. The "shavel" of Garhwal is far worse, though probably it gives a still better hold on rock even than the grass shoe.

The final rise to our pass was a terrible fag, and also farther than we expected. Snow lay on an ice foundation at an alarming angle, but it was luckily in perfect order, and there was no danger. Still, the final slopes were very icy and steep, and required considerable step-cutting by the Brocherels. Finally, eight very blown men arrived on the knife-edge pass. The ridge we were on connects Dunagiri with Changabang, and is on the Rishi side distinctly sensational. The scale is immense, and the general elevation great, the pass being approximately 20,100 feet. I must say, for a blown and heavily-laden man, the descent was not encouraging. On our left, ice slopes at a steep angle; on our right, A.P.¹ cliffs. The line of descent lay between the two. Henri Brocherel was let down on two hundred feet of rope, Alexis and myself paying him out; he reported "all well," but said pitons must be fixed lower down. So down he went again and fixed them, taking light cord with him. He was followed by Longstaff, and then Dhanlal, who was very heavily weighted, his great fishing-creel basket (an excellent shape for carrying purposes, by the way) being topped by a large sack of "satu"—baked and powdered barley—an excellent iron ration. It was neatly cleared off his

¹ A.P. is the commonest term used by mountaineers in describing difficult climbs done by *themselves*: it means *Absolutely Perpendicular*, if not overhanging.

back by a falling stone just as he was in the worst part of the descent. Budhichand, who left just before me, said to me, with that delightful directness which is the chief charm one experiences in dealing with Goorkhas, "Are you in a funk?" I said, "Yes, a little, but we have got to go." He replied, "I am too, rather." But he went down like a bird. I was rather comforted, as my load was not so heavy as that of Alexis or as those carried by the Goorkhas, but when my turn came Alexis said to me, "Monsieur Bruce, your load is lighter than mine; I am coming down last, please take mine." I immediately answered, "With pleasure"; my real meaning being, "D—n your eyes. I thought you would not have remembered." It was very cold, but I was drenched by the time I got to the little crack in which the party had hidden themselves. The descent was very steep in places, with verglas-covered rocks, and when one is carrying a load of at least 50 lbs., and sometimes has to trust to fixed ropes, one is apt to get warm, not to speak of the extra warmth of funk produced by a falling stone taking one's paggri neatly off one's head.

Alexis Brocherel's final descent was very interesting. He brought all his ropes with him, and was warmly congratulated by every one. In fact, his performance, quite new to the Goorkhas,

has not been forgotten by them. However, he treated it as nothing, though I think in his own heart he was quite pleased with himself. From here down to our final bivouac at the head of the Arhamani glacier the road was not difficult, though it consisted of very steep and rather soft snow slopes. Towards the end we glissaded our loads and did sitting glissades after them.

That night I prefer to forget. I always get very hot, and my clothing was, to say the least of it, damp. We had forgotten one of the most necessary things of all for travelling in the Himalaya, that is, thin mackintosh sheets for the tents; and the consequence was that camping early before the snow was properly frozen, we were wet all night, and I fell ill with what is known as mountain sickness, but is really a mixture of many forms of trials. But it was our own fault for being so foolish as to forget such a simple precaution, especially as we should have given them to other people to carry. Our further journey into the Rishi was a joy, toilsome as it was. I have seldom spent more strenuous days, or more delightful ones. We were in a country which possibly had never been seen by human beings, or if seen, only by Graham's party. The scenery was of the very highest Alpine order, and we had the real pleasure of not knowing how in the earth we were going to find our way out. We

had, in fact, everything that makes a mountain expedition enjoyable, the one drawback being the heavy loads we carried. For all one's appreciation of fine scenery, of nature in general, and of nice little questions in rock-climbing in particular, one's pleasure is seriously marred by 40 lbs. of kit on one's back. I improved vastly in comfort towards the evening, and though distinctly seedy for most of the day, was by twelve o'clock quite able to sit up and take a little nourishment.

We had quite an exciting little rock-climb down a very interesting gorge in our descent. We were let down with the loads on a double rope down one particularly steep pitch, Dr. Longstaff arriving last. I omitted to unknot the rope before sending it up, the consequence being that it stuck in the rocks for some time. I see by the Indian papers this year that Dr. Longstaff is mentioned as a medical missionary travelling in the Himalaya. He would certainly have been repudiated by all known Missionary Societies, if their governing bodies had been standing at the exact spot where I was at that moment. I was very much hurt myself by his remarks.

The next days were days of toil, only broken by Dr. Longstaff's really remarkable performance with a herd of burhel at forty yards; he got two. I never laugh, I take these things too seriously, but

he would have had an awful time if I had sent him back to recruit's parade to pass his musketry. It only showed what casualties result from unaimed fire; however, we ate his bag for the rest of the day as hard as we could, and stored all the remainder, though I had visions of plenty of smoked meat to ration us up Trissul on our regular campaign.

After the continual and awful fag of crossing the lower slopes of the Rishi, it was a perfect blessing to see the alp of Dibruggheta below us on the afternoon of the 28th. We spent a very pleasant but damp evening. Next day an easy march brought us to Dibruggheta, and the following day a very laborious climb over a small peak about 15,800 feet high ended in a very steep snow descent, an excellent glissade, and a terrible five hours' struggle down the Tolma Valley through thick jungle, during which every one took his own line, to our own camp at Surai Tota. I cannot say that I enjoyed this day, as an abscess was forming on my knee-cap, and I had great difficulty in arriving at all.

During the following fortnight I was completely laid up with this abscess, and was unable to join in the party's most successful attack on Trissul. They had a trying time getting in, as the last mile and a half of the track leading into the Rishi runs

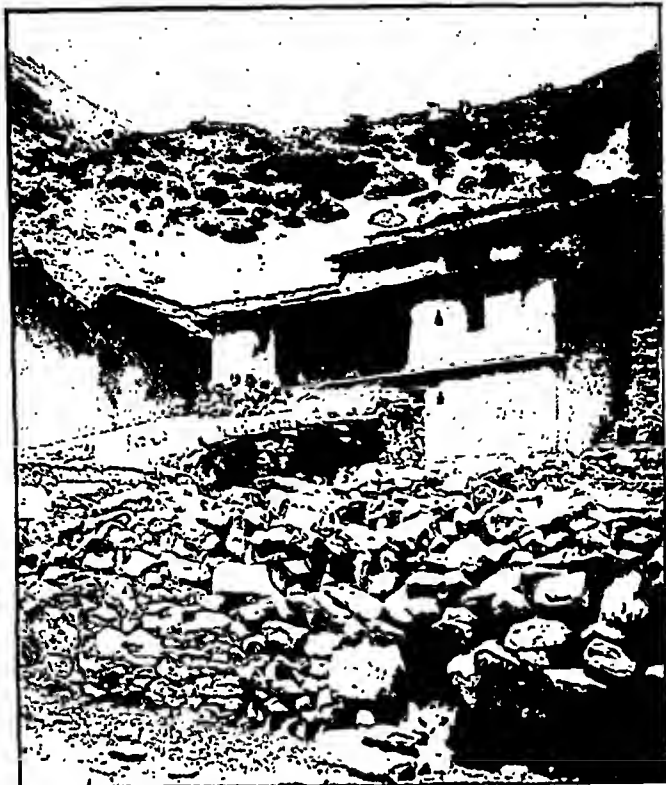
along the face of very steep cliffs, and takes the form of a very narrow ledge which crosses the face of these cliffs with considerable ascents and descents. When this narrow track is obliterated with snow frozen hard, it can be easily understood that the difficulty of taking a heavily laden train across is greatly increased. Even when I crossed with about ten coolies we had quite a scramble, and one of my coolies slipped out of his steps in crossing a gully and went down some 50 feet, luckily at one of the few places where such a slip would not mean going over a precipice. Travelling was made considerably more difficult by the fact that the local "shavel" has a way of polishing and rounding off snow steps so as to make them very treacherous. I joined the party for a short time, too late for the ascent, but was not fit for any hard work. However, the high air and the considerable exercise, which any kind of travel through the Rishi Valley involves, put me right by the time we all got back for the second time to Surai Tota.

The ascent of Trissul does not present actual technical mountaineering difficulties, but the party had had several days' very hard work, not only in moving camps up the Trissul glacier, but in being obliged to lie up during a "tourment" at 20,000 feet, and any one who has had a like experience knows that takes a good deal of the bloom off one's

condition. The English term "stamina" does not half as well describe the most important quality required for high mountaineering as the French word *résistance*—*résistance* not only to hard work, but to cold nights and high elevations and little food. That is what is required, and I think the amount of *résistance* that they showed was most creditable to their constitutions.

After the storm was partially over, they descended to recover their strength to the plateau on which they had been encamped, at an elevation of 15,800 feet, and from there it was decided that four of the party—Dr. Longstaff, the two Brocherels, and Subadar Karbir Burathoki—should return with the remainder of the Goorkhas to carry their camp and all the remaining supplies to a higher and more suitable level, and make one more attempt to reach the summit, the Goorkhas retiring to the base camp as the food was exhausted. They finally camped at about 16,800 feet, and from that comparatively low elevation reached the top and returned in a single day. It must have been a terrible grind, but was a great triumph, and we felt further that whatever might happen during the rest of our trip our expedition had not been in vain.

I believe that afterwards another exploring mountaineer, with many successes to his name,



VILLAGE OF NITI.



GARHWALI COOLIES GRASSHOP OR 'SHAVEL'

was rather anxious about the last 10 feet of Trissul—he was jealous of that last 10 feet; he wanted it for himself. There was once upon a time a vulgar and popular comic song with the refrain—

Cut me off a yard or two,
I'll tell you when to stop,
All I want is a little bit off the top!

May I recommend the excellent mountaineering moral conveyed in this rhyme to the delectation of the before-mentioned mountaineer?

A couple of days after our return to the base at Surai Tota we started off hopefully for the reconnaissance of our second objective, Kamet, and its neighbouring glaciers. However, the rainy season was much nearer than we had expected, and our calculations of being beyond bad weather at mid-summer, when once past the Nanda Devi-Trissul group, were not verified. For the first part of our journey our road led *via* the main Niti Pass trade route, past the villages of Malari and Niti, where we branched off up the Raikana Valley.

At our camp near Niti I saw rather an amusing incident. A Bhutia was returning to his village, having lunched at Niti, not wisely but much too well (for the Bhutias brew and drink a rough spirit in considerable quantities). He had great difficulty in getting along the path, and fell off it several

times. Coming to a small stream spanned by a narrow bridge, he tried to walk across but could not manage it, till he finally took it at a canter on all-fours ! The Goorkha orderlies and myself were much amused, and watched his further progress with interest, till he finally disappeared round a corner and we forgot him. In a minute or two, however, some one shouted out, "He's going to cross the bridge to Gumsali village ; he will never do it." So two of the Goorkhas set off, but only just caught him in time, as he was approaching the bridge, which was very narrow, with a steep and still narrower ascent to it, and the Dhaoli, a roaring torrent, foaming below. As before, he was going to cross on all-fours, but the two hoisted him across and left him in safety.

For a time all went well, and we made a most interesting reconnaissance at the head of the Rai Kana glacier ; but Kamet, from that direction, would want an expedition in itself. We visited a pass at the head of the Rai Kana glacier, approximately 20,800 feet high, but the approach to Kamet by the adjoining ridge would probably have taken five or six days of the hardest climbing for loaded men, and we should have had again to depend on ourselves. Beyond a certain point it would have been impossible to take the local Bhutias, clothed and booted as they are, and with-

out any firing. So that project had to be given up, and we returned again.

Kamet could not be tackled from this side, so we determined to cross into the Badrinath Valley of the Alaknanda river, with a light camp, sending our main camp on ahead to meet us. We had a most delightful expedition over the Bhyundar Pass, which was originally crossed by Colonel Smyth in 1862.

When once we had passed the watershed between the Dhaoli and the Alaknanda, we found ourselves once more in the before-mentioned mixture of alps and Switzerland, but on what a scale ! The pass, or rather the passes (for one really has to cross two passes, with a charming camp at an alp between the two), are quite easy to negotiate and not very high—the true Bhyundar 16,500, and the col beyond, 14,700 feet approximately. From the top of the second pass one has a most striking view ; indeed it appealed to me even more than the wonderful 9000 feet face of Hathi Parbat as seen from our half-way camp or below the Bhyundar. The descent to Hanuman Chetti on the Alaknanda is almost sensational in its steepness, the cliff and forest scenery quite out of the common, while the whole front of the picture is filled by the beautiful pinnacle of Nila Kanta (21,700 feet).

We spent a more or less quiet day at the temple of Badrinath, where I must say I found it distinctly

pathetic to see the not very attractive pilgrims of all ages and classes—even old women in baskets, carried by a single porter—from all parts of India. There is a story that in old days these porters would contract to carry the old people up, being paid beforehand, and, on arrival at a convenient cliff, tip them over and return for another load. Even now, when there is a Government mule-track to Badrinath, there are plenty of convenient cliffs. In old days the road must have been very bad. We were not, I imagine, very attractive ourselves, as we were burnt black by the sun, and had grown beards; so much so, that an employé of the temple, who could speak English, came up and asked if we had not come from Africa. I said, "No, certainly not; but why?" "Because you have such beards and are so dark," he replied.

Shortly after we reached our next camp, Mana, which was to be our base, I received a much more severe shock more or less as related by Mr. Mumm, but worse, far worse than his account. Two days after our arrival a middle-aged young lady sent a message to me that ever since she had seen me on the day of our arrival she had been ill. I was very much hurt, I allow; during the course of a short but interesting career, no such snub had ever been administered to my self-respect. I said, "But can't I do anything?" She said, "Yes; wash your face and let me have the water." So we got hot water and soap,

and she sat on a rock to see that there was no deception. The water, or rather the decoction, was then put into a long tumbler, and she then and there drank it all! What is more, the next day she sent word that she was quite cured. It is a blessing to have been of some use in this world anyhow. Evidently I've got a more serviceable face than I thought.

Our intended exploration to Kamet from this side came to a rapid and unfortunate end. Dr. Longstaff made a sporting reconnaissance of the Mana Pass, but although the whole country is crammed with the most tremendous and virtually unknown glaciers and mountains, these were not for us. The weather absolutely collapsed, and after our return from our local wanderings we remained in our tents for four days, or almost in them, for it hardly stopped raining at all. After a council of war it was decided that Mumm and myself should start for Kashmir, and that Longstaff should continue some explorations that he wished to make on the south side of Trissul. He, I believe, had a most successful time and a very lucky one, for although our journey back was not exactly dry, still the monsoon of that year was a very light one; so much so, that on our arrival—well into August—in Kumaon, people, especially those interested in tea, were complaining of a shortage of water, and fearing a failure of crops in consequence.

Finally, Garhwal-cum-Kumaon has not been half explored. It would require any number of mountaineering trips to do so properly. Its lower glaciers, or rather the glaciers on the southern face of the great group Trissul-Nanda-Devi-Nanda-kot, are but little known, with the exception of the Pindari; while on the northern side the great basin below Nanda Devi has yet to be reached. The Bagini, as Mr. Mumm relates, would require a whole season, and a party who were content with a modicum of exploring and a maximum of climbing would find all they could do in many seasons in the Rishi and Dunagiri plus Bagini valleys, especially as they could vary their work with tahr and burhel shooting. North come the groups topped by the Ghori Parbat and Hathi Parbat peaks, and the Kosa glacier basin and many other glaciers of greater and less size, connecting north with the main chain and the Kamet group, and forming a bewildering maze of mountains.

I am inclined to think that from early September to October 15th would be the best time for the exploration of Kamet; but it would require undivided attention, and this is one of the reasons that we failed in that direction—on my part an unregretted failure, as we travelled over and saw so much wonderful country.

feet above the sea, though there are, of course, small points which exceed this by 1000 feet or so ; but the feature which gives special character to this district is the great wall of the Dhaoli Dhar range, which bounds the valley on the north, and may best be called the outer Himalaya. It lies directly east of the broken Kangra tableland to a maximum height of 17,000 feet odd, and having, roughly speaking, an average elevation of 15,000 feet, runs from the Kulu border to the Kashmir border. It is far too grand and imposing to be described as foot-hills, although it forms a barrier between the main chain and the plains.

I wonder whether anywhere else in the world there is such an abrupt wall without foot-hills, for, as I have said, the broken hilly country of the Kangra cannot be described as foot-hills to this ridge. The rise is too abrupt, there is far too great a wall-like effect, and indeed from any of the points one passes on the ridge, the impression given is that of looking directly into a flat country. It is an extraordinarily precipitous wall, and, of the many passes across it, there are very few that are not regular staircases for the last 3000 feet or so. The effect is picturesquely heightened by the dark, heavy forests of ilex and rhododendron on the middle and lower slopes, which, when one is among them, give a curious dark and striking appear-



GOLDEN TEMPLE, KANGRA, AS IT WAS BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE.

ance to the scenery in contrast to the great grey precipices above them.

The whole of this district suffered most terribly from the calamitous earthquake of 1905. The loss of life has been variously computed, but I believe 20,000 people would be a fair estimate, including the Kulu Valley, which also suffered heavily. It certainly, as an estimate, does not err on the side of exaggeration. To give an idea of the violence of the shocks, the great fort of Kangra, 600 years old, and built of the solidest of masonry, was completely destroyed; as also was the Golden Temple in Kangra town itself—a very great loss, if only for its extraordinary and picturesque situation. The military station of Dharmsala on the actual slopes of the Dhaoli Dhar range was simply flattened; the church, nearly all the barracks, and the officers' houses being thrown down in two minutes. The loss of life, amongst both Europeans and natives, was very heavy, as, owing to the earthquake occurring at about six o'clock in the morning, most people at that time of year—early in April—were still in bed. However, such a catastrophe is not likely to be of frequent occurrence, as it was shown by experts not to have been volcanic in character, but to have been caused by flaws in the strata, and to a sudden settling of these strata over a large area.

Mountain scenery is always, to my mind, affected by the character of its inhabitants and the buildings they live in. The flat-roofed houses of the western Himalaya, with their squalor and dirt, are seldom, however well situated, an assistance to the scenery, whereas the neat villages of the Kangra Valley, with their slate and thatched roofs, are most picturesque, whether in the actual valley itself or in the hill villages. The villages of the hill folk are often very strikingly placed, and have frequently quite the appearance of Swiss chalets. Anywhere in the world mountain villages are dirty. It is only a question of degree, though it is true that there are many degrees, and, taking it all round, the hill villages on the Dhaoli Dar range take a very good degree indeed. The higher the mountains and the more trying the winter the greater the dirt undoubtedly.

Very large numbers of the hill people belong to the Gaddi tribe, a tribe of pastoral semi-nomads, great numbers of whom spend three-quarters of every year out herding sheep, and only the other quarter at their homes. For all that, their homes are not badly built, and are fairly comfortable, infinitely better than the usual villages in the higher valleys of Garhwal. They herd immense flocks of sheep and goats, many being their own and many belonging to other people, who place



GOLDEN TEMPLE RUINS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.
(THE REMAINS OF THE DOME ARE SHOWN BY AN X.)



OFFICERS' MESS 1ST (P.W.O.'s.) GURKHA RIFLES, DHARMSALA.

them in their charge. The other great tribe of professional herdsmen in the Himalaya is a Mohammedan tribe named Gujars. Comparing these two tribes, the Gaddi show up very well, and are infinitely better people to deal with, having a good reputation for honesty, which is not a characteristic of Gujars as I have seen them. They are generally good-looking and picturesquely dressed, their loose home-spun shirts being well made, and the outer one sufficiently large to stow away quite a little flock of lambs or kids too weak to keep up with the rest of the flock. I once saw a man who seemed extraordinarily swollen, and by special request he extracted lamb after lamb to the number of sixteen. This occurred during a trip I made in 1902, over the Sarai Pass into Chamba, from the tea-growing Palampur district of the Kangra Valley, in search of red bear. Chamba is still the headquarters of *Ursus Isabellinus*, now getting so scarce in many of its old haunts, where forty years ago it was to be found in quite considerable numbers.

From a sporting point of view my trip was fairly successful, but the time at my disposal was short, and the season September, and the weather still atrocious. The country, like all the parts of Chamba that I have had the luck to travel in,

was perfect of its kind; this part is sub-alpine in character, though this is hardly a fair criticism, as I was in rather minor and out-of-the-way valleys which did not give an idea of the near neighbourhood of the great mountains.

The climate of the Dhaoli Dhar ridge, from its position directly over the plains of the Punjab, is a humid one, as of necessity it has an immense precipitation of rain, amounting this year (1909) to 180 inches in three months; and the reverse slope gets a very large though diminished share of it, any gap in the ridge, such as the Sarai Pass, letting in an extra quantity. However, though I travelled far too much—a great fault for a sportsman—it means, of course, want of patience,—we saw fifteen red bears in fourteen days across the pass, of which I took my little toll, though on several days bad weather and consequent mist spoilt the shooting entirely.

Chamba is noted for its hill shooting, whether large game, pheasants, or the chicken partridge. The high hills hold ibex and thar, red and black bear, and on the lower slopes gooral, often, but not very wisely, called the Himalayan chamois, for though there is a slight resemblance in shape and head, in personal habits no two animals could be further separated. The Dhaoli Dhar ridge, its southern boundary, used to hold a good head of

simply amounts to the fact that unless in these difficult countries some such arrangement is in force, all travelling, except for those capable of carrying their own kit, must cease entirely, although it may on occasions, such as harvest time, bear hardly on the peasant.

Nevertheless, the coolie difficulty having been overcome, this is the one district where quite short mountaineering trips can be made. Where else in India can one leave the train in the morning and drive directly to the foot of the great hills, which one does from the station of Pathankote, if one is lucky, in twelve hours? If one is still more lucky and has a local friend to make the arrangements, and if one has, further, got over the shock and disgust of driving for twelve hours behind obviously inadequate ponies, a start can be made the next morning for the mountains. I have made some few trips under these conditions, though my luck in this district with regard to weather has been really bad.

In December of 1904, however, we managed to bring off a most sporting little climb (Alpine J., 1904.) Although the weather had a good shot at us, it did not make up its mind to be really disagreeable to me, as it has invariably done since that date. Directly above the station of Dharmsala, at a height of about 10,200 feet, is the high alp of

Lakkar, most picturesquely situated and with a character quite its own, chiefly due to the peculiar darkness of the forest of these hills which I have before mentioned, the contrast between their darkness and the snows above being most striking. We spent a chilly but very cheerful evening, "we" being my friend Money, of the 1st Goorkhas (my local provider, guide, and philosopher, his Goorkha, and my Goorkha Karbir Barathoki, often before mentioned. We climbed on the following day a most sporting little peak, and had some ice and rock work of a quite respectably high order, the chief incident being a climb into a deep-cut chimney over a bulging lump of ice, and the further scramble up the chimney, unpleasantly iced, and, as usual, A.P. (I apologise for using this term again, but it is the only way of being impressive, unless one says one measured the angle of slope and found it 75°. Either of these methods is adequate, always assisted by photography.)

Karbir distinguished himself by his own methods. These were most effective, but I do not recommend them to the average person. He managed to fix himself at the top of the chimney, though in a most awkward position, we remaining in big steps out of the ice near its mouth; then, as both hands and feet were employed, he held the rope in his teeth and assisted me

up on it. I was, on arrival, directed into a small cave some way above him, into which I crept like a lizard. Short of being cut in two, nothing could have moved me, and the strain was soon over, but I was glad when those three had done pulling. Finally, after another hour or two we got to the top of the peak, only to discover that it was not the one we wanted, but the next one to it. Here was a good chance for my local guide to show me his philosophical side. He did this quite nicely, but, as for me, I used most of the forcible words I could remember. As we had no time to waste, having to get down for dinner to old Dharmsala at about 4000 feet elevation only, we at once started home by the ridge, since to have returned by that gully would have taken too long, and, making good time by a convenient snow couloir to our camp and running the remaining way, we were able to arrive, as they say across the Pond, "on time."

One other expedition, also unfortunately late in the year, a design on a very fine peak locally called the Matterhorn, was completely spoilt by weather, though we came in for some of the usual trials of Himalayan travel, coolie difficulties, and having to carry one's own kit in consequence. We had a most delightful bivouac one night, and a most unpleasant one on another occasion, before

some of the porters disappeared. Colonel Powell, who was one of the party, and myself went up a different nullah from the coolies and spent the night *à la belle étoile*, ordinarily quite a pleasant thing to do, but chilly in December. The pleasant bivouac, also *à la belle étoile*, was reinforced by ample food and bedding, and we celebrated the occasion. Colonel Powell had a new soup which he was very keen to try, and cooked it himself. So savoury was the smell that the entire party collected in a circle round him: two lieutenants, a lance-corporal, and two privates; or rather three worthy representatives of the great Turanian race, two who represented, I may say worthily, the genius and fire of the Celt, and one stolid miserable Englishman, no less than our before-mentioned guide, philosopher, and friend. The weather broke during the night, and certain of the coolies decamped, so the two Celts exercised with success their genius and fire in giving the stolid Saxon all the heaviest kit to carry. They exercised some more the next day by leaving the Sassenach out to shoot in the rain, while they went home as quickly as possible. Next day one Celt had not had enough. Genius was at a low ebb, but he exercised the other characteristic by burning his brother Celt's boots!

My second and last attempt on the local Matterhorn occurred this year, the year of writing, and

been in Garhwal with me, and one of whom, Budhichand, was one of Mr. Mumm's three musketeers, had to divide up the loads and take them ourselves. This is one of the essential differences between Himalayan and European mountaineering, which are—*first*, the greater quantity of baggage that is required; *secondly*, the difficulty of getting adequate portage; and *thirdly*, the necessity of being able to carry oneself, or rather, I should say, oneself plus a very good load besides.

The exigencies of Himalayan travel were brought home to me with considerable vividness before we got into camp that day, or down to the first Chamba settlement on the following evening. After the first hour we had trouble with all our coolies, a mixed lot of inferior Gaddis, who disappointed me very much, as I had heard so much of Gaddis, and my previous experience of them had been so good. A scud of wind and sleet lasting half an hour took all the go out of them, and they evidently dreaded the pass. They were right in their judgment of the weather, however, and we were wrong, though at the moment, with the sun shining below us on the Kangra fields, it did not seem possible that the weather could quite break up. However, in an hour it did break with a vengeance, bringing thunder, wind, and driving snow, and a very cold atmosphere. We

kept on expecting it would turn out to be only another short storm. But not a bit of it; it got worse and worse, and then began our real troubles. The rear-guard, as before mentioned, began finding deserted loads on the ground and no porters, and as the loads mounted up, so the road got more and more precipitous, the last 1000 feet being steep and rough walking at any time, but now, covered in fresh snow and with the wind driving a mixture of snow and sleet through everything, harder work than ever, and it was a very blown rear-guard that finally arrived on the pass.

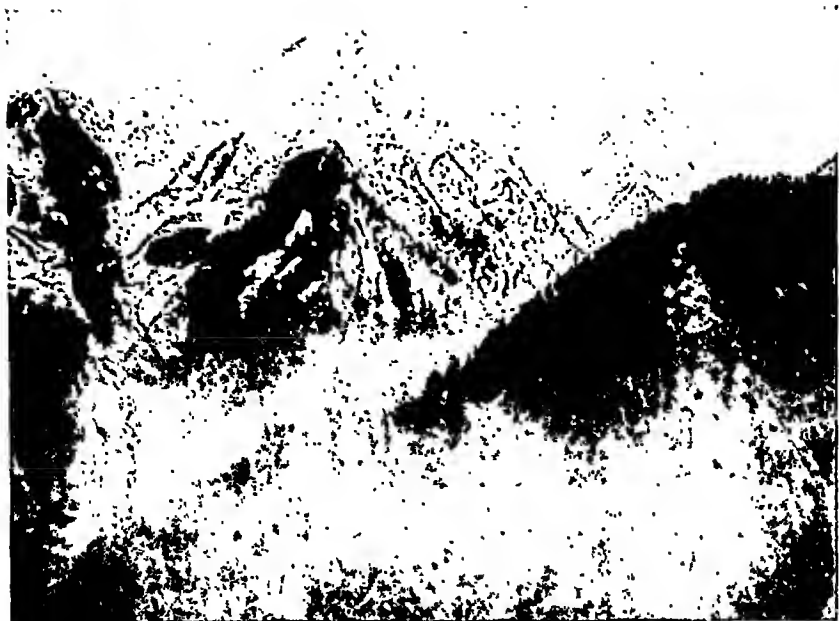
This only shows, what has often been pointed out, how quickly bad weather can change the easiest mountain, and how careful one has to be when in charge of a train of porters, not to run any risk. The descent, after the first 300 feet, which is steep, is ordinarily almost a run down, but it now took a long time, the path being very difficult to find, and the steps of the leading men being completely obliterated. Trouble immediately began with the men, partly through cold and partly from their being dazed by the wind and driving snow. We were in for a big fall of snow, that was evident. Whenever the clouds lifted, as they occasionally did, we could see fresh snow far below us, and caught glimpses also of precipitous hill-sides and great gorges. Night, moreover, was closing in, the

last two or three coolies were lagging, and the rear-guard's loads getting bigger and bigger and their tempers beginning to wobble a little. Then came almost the last straw; two more loads were found, including the only Whymper tent; the last two coolies wept without restraint, and the rear-guard sat down to enjoy the catastrophe in profane silence.

Having done itself a certain amount of good in this way, the loads were readjusted, and we proceeded in the growing dusk along very slippery hill-sides. Every one came down once or twice, but still the silence was maintained. Shortly after it was quite dark we arrived at a very small cave just under the wood-line, and managed to put our Whymper and Mummery tents up and get the coolies into the best shelter possible. The worst day has an ending, and there are always compensations to every evil. We dug out our bottle of ginger wine. Quoting from the story of the farmer and his wife and the pot of beer, I remarked to Minchington, "Drink 'earty, Maria; drink wery nigh 'alf." He took a long pull of—spirits of wine. It would have comforted any one to have seen his face and to have heard our smiles. Truly there are compensations in this world.

It snowed all night, and was snowing the next day, and, as we had expected from the views of the

precipices and gorges beneath, we were told that in the present state of the weather the coolies would not be able to carry more than a few pounds, and we must pack up and get out as quickly as possible. So, stocking everything in our Whimper tent, we left for warmer regions. A very rough and slippery road we found it. Not for a minute until five in the evening did it stop snowing, when we came in sight of our destination, the village of Kwasi, in the Chamba district. Notwithstanding our "demonstration moist unpleasant bodies," we were both most tremendously struck by our surroundings. They reminded me at the time of the finest parts of Garhwal, south of the Trissul range, though I modified my opinion next morning when we were able to see better. The village of Kwasi itself is suggestive of a high Swiss village, the houses having very much the same character as small chalets. We were received by the Lambarhar and given very comfortable quarters, and spent quite a refreshing night in spite of wet clothes and sleeping



CHAMBA SCENERY.



KWASI VILLAGE, CHAMBA.

in the morning. I think I have rarely come across a more beautiful and impressive scene, even assisted as it may have been by the fresh snow. The sculpture of the valley of Kwasi is on the boldest lines, and steep almost to the verge of being precipitous on both sides, faced at its lower end by the bold points of the Manimais *massif*, some 18,500 to 19,000 feet, and at its upper end enclosed by the great high Dhaoli ridge. The valley itself joins the valley of the Ravi some eight miles lower down with over 4000 feet of descent, the track winding along the most precipitous hill-side. On the southern slopes there is the typical Chamba forest of fir, pine, and deodar, the opposite slopes being still bolder, but nearly bare.

This sounds like a description which would apply to Garhwal or parts of Kashmir equally well. But Chamba has its own characteristics and is quite distinct, even as the Kangra slopes on the Punjab side are entirely different in character.

We were obliged to stay in Kwasi village for three days to arrange for new coolies, as, unfortunately, some five of our old ones had suffered severely from the storm. As a result of forty-eight hours' continuous snow at this time of year, all chance of climbing was at an end for at least a fortnight. The Gaddis themselves cross this part in numbers about as late as November, and they all agreed

that the pass would be ready for them to take their sheep over in a fortnight. Still the three days we spent were full of delight. We wandered about, went on to the nearest point of view and photographed, and lazed and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. If we had been shooting we could have had a first-rate time. It is a great game country. As it was, we saw both tahr and gooral, and numbers of monal and kohlass pheasants, and chickore partridges. So, as usual, there were compensations. The Gaddis were very interesting, and the children the most pleasant little people, quite independent and full of play.

Among other most tempting views which we obtained were some of peaks to the north of Chamba, Chobia and the Chobia Pass, leading to Lahaul, and a great neighbouring peak, Tundah by name, extremely fine. What a perfect six months could be spent by a sporting and mountaineering party in this beautiful Chamba, especially if they did not have that real bugbear of all expeditions, an object in view! That is the real bogey—a big peak to be tackled, and no time for real enjoyment, either of sport or of mountaineering; nothing, in fact, but glory to be gained.

“This goin’ ware glory waits ye,” as the *Biglow Papers* say, “hain’t one agreeable feetur!” Nothing could be truer than this of very high

climbing, whereas the amount of sport that could be obtained and the amount of real mountaineering that could be done, with a limit of 20,000 feet, is enormous, and an unexampled time could be put in.

The return journey over the range to Dharm-sala was full of interest and beauty, but uneventful. We returned to our camp at Ravi and found our belongings unharmed, though the Whymper tent in which we had left them had to be dug out of a snowdrift. The actual crossing of the pass gave quite a little scramble, owing to the presence of verglas wherever it could form, and to the amount of snow on the northern slopes. We came in for a most marvellous view from the pass itself over the Punjab plains, some 14,000 feet below us, and we were more than ever impressed by the wall-like appearance of the Dhaoli Dhar ridge. One curious effect was that the rough Kangra hill country appeared absolutely flat.

Thus ended, eliminating the much-to-be-deplored harm to the porters, a most interesting and beautiful trip—a trip, however, which only stimulated an appetite naturally voracious for travel; and, considering the amount of glorious country still to be explored, it is most inconvenient that man's years are but threescore and ten; and if, by chance, one is spared for the extra ten, which are

supposed to be a pain and grief, well, there are various ways of being carried in the Himalaya, and something may still be accomplished. *L'appétit vient en mangeant*, which means greater enjoyment and appreciation even when one may be "shorter of wind, though in memory long."

Au revoir, Chamba! Given health and strength, if I don't come back, as Brer Rabbit remarked, "bust me right side inwards!"



GADDI FAMILY FOUR GENERATIONS.



GADDIS

CHAPTER V

SURU

IN the summer of 1898, some two months after the retiring of the troops from the different expeditions which had taken place in the North-West Frontier of India (for indeed the whole of that Frontier, as is well known, had risen in the summer and autumn of 1897, and peaceful conditions were not established until the spring of 1898), I arranged a rather ambitious trip into the Suru district of Ladakh. By ambitious I do not mean that we proposed to climb Nunkun (23,000 feet) or to go for any description of record, but ambitious in that I proposed to take with me a few men from several Goorkha regiments, my idea being that practice in mountaineering, or rather mountain exploration, is one of the finest educations for an infantry or hill scout. Not only is he thrown on his own resources, but his training as a pathfinder alone is worth anything to him; and in the wilds of the Himalaya this training can be obtained in a way that can probably not be matched in any other part of the

world. However good the maps may be—and in general the India Survey maps, considering the country covered, are quite astonishingly good—one is thrown quite on one's own resources, and it can be easily understood that crossing country which is entirely unknown to all members of the party, and being dependent on one's own arrangements to get back just before one's food supply is finished, is a really good training for men who are to be used as hill scouts in war-time.

Further, men trained in really difficult country will, when they have to work in much easier country, do so with great confidence and certainty; they are therefore far less likely to make mistakes—in itself a great consideration. This being my object, combined with having as good a time as possible, both climbing and shooting, if any came in my way, we set off for Suru by way of Ganderbal and the Scinde Valley in Kashmir. The party was a very formidable one, consisting of my wife and myself and sixteen Goorkhas, to say nothing of servants and coolies. From my point of view the success of the tour was very great, but beyond that, I'm afraid, I cannot pride myself. At any rate, we were not haunted by the demon of a really high mountain to be attacked. The most awful thing that I know of is the future prospect of having to go for a real giant. Moun-

tainceering among the second and third raters is just as hard work, and at the same time nearly, but not quite, as enjoyable as mountaineering in the Alps. There is generally in the Himalaya more grind on the lower slopes before the interesting part is arrived at. For purposes of explanation I count everything over 20,000 feet as first-rate, and therefore unpleasant. Any mountain on the southern watershed of up to 20,000 feet must be a long business and hard work; over that height it is too hard for pleasure. My advice therefore is.

mountain sickness—that even being entirely my own fault.

We left my regimental station in the Punjab on July 20th, with three months' leave at our disposal, and therefore in the middle of the rains. Our men and luggage had all marched on ahead of us, for the route lay up the Scinde Valley, and the main route to Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is of course a good made road. We intended to branch off from the first at Dras, two marches beyond the Zoji La (Pass), over the Umba La for Suru, as I had heard that mules could be taken the whole way. This was nearly the truth, but not the whole truth. On our way up we stopped for a couple of days at Sonemarg, a charming alp of about 8000 feet altitude, and were lucky enough to have some fine weather. Consequently we arranged for two parties to go out on the mountains to the south, not mountains of particular distinction, but with small glaciers on their sides, and offering an infinite variety of not too serious climbing, the object being to teach the new Goorkhas how to use a rope and ice-axe. Major Lucas of my regiment was spending a month of his leave with us; he and I therefore went with one party led by Subadar Karbir Burathoki, whose name is now remembered as being one of the successful climbers of Trissul, the other party being led by Subadar Major (as he



INDIANS OF LITTO TIBET



CLIMBING PARTY OF GOORKHAS, WITH F. G. LUCAS AND C. G. BRUCE.

is to-day) Harkabir Thapa. The latter has had a most varied mountaineering career for a soldier of the Indian Army. He first accompanied Colonel Stewart of the 5th Goorkha Rifles to the Pamirs in 1890, at the time when Sir Francis Younghusband was, so to speak, temporarily detained by the Russian authorities. He next earned the Order of Merit for soldiers of the Indian Army, the nearest reward to, though not actually equivalent to, the V.C. that can be obtained by a native soldier. Afterwards he accompanied Sir Martin Conway in the Karakoram expedition in 1892, and among other climbs reached with him and myself the summit of Pioneer Peak. From 1892 to 1899 he was my chief companion, sometimes with and sometimes without Subadar Karbir Burathoki, in the Kaghan range and Kashmir. He was the leading guide of the expedition I am now describing, and in the following year travelled with Professor Norman Collie and myself in Switzerland (1899), and afterwards in the Coolin Hills in Skye.

His companion, Subadar Karbir Burathoki, had an almost equal record. He had also been with Sir M. Conway's expedition in 1892, but had not then come to his full strength. He afterwards led me in my climbs of 1892 to 1898, and also accompanied Sir M. Conway in his march across the Alps, as related by him in *The Alps from*

End to End, primarily as an Alpine porter, and latterly as his only assistant with another Goorkha, who went to Europe with him. Since 1898 he has done but little mountaineering proper, but has, of course, been continually working in the foot-hills, not only at his regimental work. He had also won the Indian Order of Merit for work during the Tirah Expedition in 1897. These two set to work with their thirteen recruits, and in a very few days got them to use the rope and axe well. They all, of course, were hillmen and excellent on most kinds of rock, especially steep slabs or on any ground requiring good balance and steady heads.

Goorkhas are naturally very reckless on the hill-side. At first they don't know anything about snow and ice work and refuse to believe there is anything to learn, but after a small accident or so, such as stones coming down among them or tumbling through snow bridges, generally owing to their habits of chancing everything, they very soon take hold.

Our little jaunt over, we crossed the Zoji La to Dras, the weather having got bad again, and when once over the main watershed found ourselves, as we had expected, in fine weather, and further, in a Thibetan climate, dry air and burning sun, with a great drop of temperature at night.

Dras was very warm in the day, but although the altitude is not great—very little over 8000 feet—the nights were quite cold. Then we journeyed over the Umba La to Sanku. The Umba La has a pony track, and is quite a pleasant walk with a steep descent. Major Lucas and I decided to stay here for some days and explore the neighbouring peaks and glaciers. My wife went on by the ordinary route to Suru with the luggage and main camp. We kept a very light camp and only necessities. We had some very pleasant scrambling, and reached one morning a height of approximately 18,000 feet, on a perfectly easy and perfectly humdrum hill-side. Here we made acquaintance with the peculiar shale of the district, beyond anything the most tiring that I have come across; broken up into the smallest particles and quite unstable, and nearly always at the steepest angle at which it is possible for it to lie; quite the most leg-wearying and hideously uninteresting stuff I have ever walked on. Further, we were in Thibet, which means a snow-line at least 2000 feet higher than on the southern slopes; the consequences were that whereas these slopes would have been still deep in snow in the south, here they were bare and there was no getting away from them. In fact, the whole aspect of the country was Thibetan; no grass except where water could be laid on by canals; the hill-sides an

abomination of desolation, but wherever water can be produced most fertile, with a wealth of wild flowers equalled in few places and surpassed by none, always, of course, in the very limited water area. In fact, one day my wife picked fifty-five different kinds, including five different blue gentians, and edelweiss.

To return to our peak. The toil of the ascent was quite worth it, for though we had expected a fine panorama, we did not anticipate the view we got. To our surprise, there was the whole of the great Mustagh range—absolutely clear to the north, including my old friends Gasherbrum and Masherbrum. Still farther to the east were the Nubra Peaks, a wonderful *coup d'œil*, but hard as iron, and though the largeness was apparent, by reason of the iron dryness and hardness, the sense of scale, and of depth in particular, was wanting, and further, the want of rich colour makes such views inferior to those of the eastern Himalaya, and in my point of view to far smaller ones, which are almost everywhere to be found on the southern slopes. The want of atmospheric effect is very much felt everywhere north of the range, though (and this is very much the case in lower Ladakh) to a degree compensated for by the rich colouring of the rocks themselves. These rocks and scrubby mountains have a beastly ugliness which is dis-

tinely impressive, but it is meagreness and hideous desolation—things to have seen but not to live with.

We had designs on another neighbouring point, and the two guides, Subadar Harkabir Thapa and Subadar Karbir Burathoki, were sent off to explore. They attempted to climb it, but had to turn back when within 300 feet of the summit, as they said the rocks were too rotten for anything, and further added that they had done some of the hardest climbing that they had ever attempted. In their opinion a small party of three would probably get along, but as it was impossible to move without dislodging stones, a large party would be out of the question. Instead of attempting this undesirable point, we determined to make a fancy pass over the ridge into the Suru Valley proper, and did so the following day, having quite by chance hit off a very convenient pass, with an easy ascent and no particular difficulty in the descent, though it was very steep, the fall to the river being approximately 8000 feet. We joined the Suru road some miles short of Suru itself, and after walking for a considerable time along a very good road, congratulated ourselves on the ease with which the mules had been able to get along. We soon got a shock, however. About two miles off Suru we came upon a wide roaring torrent, and saw all our

mules on the near bank. "Where is the bridge?" we said. They pointed to two barked trees, the thick ends embedded in stones on either side, the thin ends lashed together and sagging in the middle. I said to the mule-men, "You don't mean to tell me my wife crossed that?" They answered, "Oh yes; the servants stretched a rope across and she went over." "And the riding ponies?" I asked. "Oh, they put some of your ropes round them and the Bhutias hauled them through." I must say I did not enjoy it; it was much more difficult or rather unpleasant than any rope bridge. Whether the regular bridge had been washed away, I don't know, but that was probably the case; and its substitute was the most unstable of makeshifts.

We spent the next fortnight very pleasantly, making a hurried march with a light camp to see the Tibetan monastery of Rangdum, while the greater number of the men left for the Ganri glacier, under the Nunkun peaks, to be exercised in the ice-falls round Nunkun under the two instructors. On our return the main camp was left at Tonglo while we organised an expedition over the Sentik La, expecting to be away for from ten to fifteen days, and return if possible by the Bhot Khol Pass, which lies at the head of the Suknes Valley, and is the recognised approach to Suru from the Wardwan Valley of Kashmir. I am

afraid the Survey map of our proposed route is most imaginary here, though that is not to be wondered at, for how is it possible with the men and money at the disposal of this department for it to cover the whole of the Himalaya above the snow-line? Still, I had expected a very much harder job than I found.

We delayed for two days, as Major Lucas's time was up and he had to fly back; so we determined to have a last walk together and ascend if possible the point approximately 18,000 feet immediately above the Gauri glacier, and separated by it from the main Nunkun peaks. However, we had a much too good lunch at Tonglo, and further, on arrival at our camp had much too much to talk about, so we did not get to bed till late. The next day came Nemesis. After arriving at a little over 17,000 feet of easy climbing we both got very bad indeed; we both said, "This is typical mountain sickness." That is to say, typical tinned lobster, Irish stew, cake, bottled stout, and commissariat rum sickness. We both smiled a sickly smile and returned to camp by different paths.

The following day Major Lucas left us for the Wardwan Valley, while we prepared for our round of explorations. We started a party of no less than twenty-eight, not knowing how long we should be away, and also not having enough Mummery tents

for the whole party. We also had rather more luggage per man than would have been comfortable to carry, so, as coolies were easily obtained, we took twelve Bhutias from Tonglo village. They were very good men, though prodigiously dirty.

The ascent to the Sentik La was quite easy, but instead of finding an intricate country we found ourselves looking down on a large glacier evidently rising in the Nunkun *massif* and flowing in the direction of the Wardwan. As the pass we were on crosses the great ridge which connects the Amarath group, Kenipater and Pt. 17,904, with the Nunkun group, it seemed more than probable that the map was wrong in this particular instance, and that we had only to follow the glacier to arrive at the Bhot Khol Pass. The ridge opposite to us on the southerly side of the glacier looked formidable, and it seemed to me of interest to march straight over the glacier to see if it took us to the Kashmir side of the Bhot Khol or not. This we proceeded to do; a short scramble brought us to the glacier, over easy snow-slopes, and then we had to rope up. There was about 350 feet of rope, a short allowance for twenty-eight people, but we managed very well by giving the leader sufficient scope. It was almost a flat walk, but with a certain amount of fresh snow and a good many small hidden crevasses, there were a good many

breaks through up to the thigh, and on one occasion up to the waist, so that the rather annoying trail of such a serpent was a correct precaution to have taken. We camped at about four o'clock on a small alp by the side of the glacier, but we had come quite far enough to see what must evidently be the Bhot Khol immediately below us. In front of us lay the only question of the tramp: a very large and broken ice-fall (*vide* photo). Karbir and myself and another Goorklia put on crampons and went to explore it. We stuck to the right bank, and had a very exhilarating climb down formidable seracs, but it was evidently too bad for our train of laden men. The Blutias especially would have been terribly handicapped with their leather foot-gear, which are nothing more than thick leather socks.

Our passage the next morning down the centre of the ice-fall was very exciting and gymnastic, but easy enough for those with crampons; the ice-fall was very broken, though luckily without any very wide crevasses. A great deal of jumping, swinging down loads, and catching of coolies had to be done, and owing to the inadequate amount of rope at our disposal, we were much delayed by having to pass it backwards and forwards. The crampon-wearers, however, were able very often to jump to the lower lips of the crevasses

and cut big landing-places for the rest of the party and the coolies to be swung on to. Though the distance was short from our upper camp, we took six hours to get to the mouth of the pass, where we camped in an open space on the moraine, and had an exhilarating lunch.

It had previously been arranged that the main camp should march round from Suru and meet us on the north side of the pass, and as we were before our time we halted for the day, and held during the afternoon an impromptu gymkhana of some fifteen different events, three kinds of putting the shot, mounted combats, hopping races, etc. I went to bed with the sun, a complete corpse, and did not move till eight o'clock the following morning.

We then crossed the Bhot Khol, and found my wife and our camp actually arriving up as we came down. Not long after leaving camp in the morning we came across the remains of a party that had been lost near this spot some years before, amongst them remains of what appears to have been a hand-bag; also more ghastly remnants in the shape of bones. I believe the party was one led by a Dr. King, who had been overwhelmed in bad weather, probably by a snow avalanche.

On top of the pass was a large cairn which we could see above us. Some of the men were well ahead of me, and shouted out to me to come to



ROAD TO THE BHOT KHOL PASS LEFT OF PICTURE. VIEW OF OUR
'GYMKHANA' GROUND AND ICEFALL WE CAME DOWN.



END OF BHOT KHOL GLACIER.

them. When I got there I saw a pair of human feet clothed in Bhotia boots sticking out from the middle of the cairn. It turned out that a woman had died on the top and been buried there.

We spent some days at this very charming camp, and all the party had two good climbs, one of no particular distinction, as it consisted of a scramble up to a particularly nasty gap between two undistinguished and unnamed points. However, Karbir's party were very keen to make this climb, and did so, returning after seventeen hours of very hard work. It was educational if nothing else. The second climb was under Harkabir's leadership; they reached a point to the west of Bhot Khol La, and directly above it, approximately 19,000 feet. He reported a very interesting climb, but what proved more difficult than the peak was his return after dark across a very noticeable branch of the Bhot Khol glacier. I had, unfortunately, strained my knee, and was unable to join either party, but I was considerably nervous when I found, some time after he had left, that he had forgotten the lanterns. However, they turned up safe enough at midnight, and said they had had a most exciting time but had pushed home, being determined not to sleep out if possible.

The Bhot Khol at the right time of the year is quite easy, and our move to Kashmir was easily

determined to try and traverse two of the three heads of the Kohenar peaks, Karbir taking the most southerly and I the northerly peak, sending a very light camp to the Shisha Nag to meet us, while my wife escorted the base camp over the Márgán Pass to Pahlgam in the Lidder Valley, where we were to foregather with them. With our party came an elderly shikari, a very active old man, with quite an exceptional amount of go for a Kashmiri; in fact, from what I saw, the men of the upper Wardwan were considerably superior to the villagers in and around the valley of Kashmir. I saw many men of very good physique and fine load-carriers, though it never does to judge a Kashmiri by appearances.

Our party had an easy, though steep ascent, and put on the rope for the last hour, as the final slope was very hard snow and the schrund below large. The descent also was not difficult, with the exception of the passage of a large and awkward schrund. There were no less than three places which, under ordinary conditions, would not have delayed us long, but large stones were continually coming down, and we did not dare chance either of them, exposed as we should have been for about twenty minutes; so we had to face an awkward crossing, which meant a traverse under the upper lip and cutting wholly away a great nose of ice which

blocked our way, ending up with a final sideways jump of six feet—a sufficiently awkward position, as it took about twenty minutes to cut the ice away.

Easy glacier and steep moraine slopes took us on to the main line to the little lake of Sheesha Nag, where we made a most delightful bivouac in the pleasantest grass. The only incident in the descent was a very rapid tumble I took on a slippery rock, which not only shook Kohenar to its base, but also displaced my hat.

Our intention on arrival at Pahlgam was to arrange for a trip to Kolahoi or Gwashbrari, a very beautiful peak and beautifully situated. In fact, the whole valley of the Lidder and its branches is most striking—typical Kashmir mountain scenery and fine specimens of forests. Near Pahlgam itself there is nowadays a regular summer settlement. A few houses have been built, but the average visitor still camps under the fir trees. Our plans were very soon upset, however, for I found a telegram awaiting me, telling me to go to Darjeeling for recruiting duty, and to be there as early as possible in October.

I must say I was very loth to close the season prematurely, and thought that with a little arrangement we could manage a peak on our way home and still be in as soon as the baggage, but it required a good travel. This appealed peculiarly

to my particularly restless mind. Accordingly, we departed from the Lidder and took boat at Islamabad for Srinagar, and thence to Sopur on the Wular Lake. My wife escorted the luggage direct by the usual main route, and we arranged to meet again at our station, Abbottabad. The rest of us, with the lightest kit, did a forced march through Kashmir across the Kishenganga to the Kaghan Valley, where we achieved our final climb on a peak which, in company with eleven others, rejoices in the name of Raji Bogee. From thence we marched down the valley to Abbottabad. A fuller account of this expedition will be found in the following chapter.



KOHENAR PEAKS FROM NEAR SHEESHA NĀG.

CHAPTER VI

A MINOR HIMALAYA VALLEY

THE valley of Kaghan, formed by the Kunhar river, is quite an ordinary unpretending western Himalayan valley, without any especial characteristics to differentiate it from other long western Himalayan valleys; but it has been dragged partially from obscurity by the fact that a good mule-road connects it with Chilas and the Gilgit districts, and that during the summer months there is a considerable traffic up and down. Nevertheless, as I have before pointed out, it is these same quite common Himalayan valleys which, to my mind, are the most delightful. In describing it as quite ordinary I do not mean that it is not beautiful and interesting, but that there are so many valleys with the same characteristics. This, to me, is one of its chief charms, its only drawback being that it holds but little game, and therefore, to the wanderer, there is less variety of entertainment. It makes up for this by being very accessible and by having a really fine climate, besides which its northern end

is almost beyond the reach of the monsoon rains. I venture to say that no mountaineering or travelling party would ever make a journey through Kaghan with no further objective. They are always off to the monsters and to glory and discomfort. Real glory can only be obtained in Kaghan by climbing its one giant, Mali, and the giant's height is not enough—a mere 17,345 feet.

The valley itself is a wedge driven up between the western border of Kashmir territory and the southern borders of the independent Kohistan tribes which inhabit the mountainous country on both sides of the Indus. The upper end of the valley actually starts from the Nanga Parbat *massif*, or perhaps I should say group, and runs in a southern direction for about 120 miles into the Punjab district of Hazara, by which it is connected with the aforementioned road. It is drained throughout its length by the Kunhar river, which finally joins the Jhelum in Kashmir territory.

My first journey up the Kaghan Valley was undertaken in the year 1890—five years before the road to Chilas was begun. In those days there was an ordinary hill track up the valley, a very ordinary one indeed, and it was with the greatest difficulty that mules could be got along. In fact, while accomplishing the first two marches I had the misfortune to lose one of mine. The road was

certainly very bad, but there was no actual necessity to repair it, especially as the people were satisfied, for in those days upper Kaghan was still very wild, and Chilas almost unknown. It is a great grazing country, and raids by the Kohistan and Chilas mountaineers were of constant occurrence. In fact, common reports put the whole of the Kaghan down as dangerous—a very mistaken idea indeed, as I found, for a more peaceable and friendly lot it would have been difficult to meet with, though I cannot describe them as a very admirable population. Kaghan is in a certain sense owned by families of Saiads, who have been settled there for many generations. Now Saiads are of the actual tribe of the Prophet, and, as such, are held in great consideration by the Mohammedan world. Further, they will do no actual agricultural labour. Since the Saiads obtained possession of the greater part of the Kaghan Valley they have multiplied greatly, and in consequence the greater part of the lands have been divided up amongst many families, the result being that there are but two or three families who are even decently well off, and the non-working remainder are paupers. As they are naturally ignorant and grasping, their tenants have had a bad time, and the Saiads themselves have degenerated in character—let us hope so, at least, for I should be sorry to think that they had always been the

mean crowd they are at present. Besides the land-owning Saiads, a certain portion of Kaghan lands are held by Swatis, the original inhabitants of Swat, which country is now in the hands of Eusafzai Pathan tribes. I have always found these Swatis a very much better people to deal with than the ruling Saiads. The other element, and possibly the most important, is the shepherd semi-pastoral tribe of Gujars, who either own or graze for wages the large herds of goats and sheep that come up into Kaghan in the summer months. They are usually an unpleasant folk, very ignorant, grasping, and surly, though often good hillmen, as are also the Swati tribes.

I have often wondered whether the Kaghaniis themselves appreciated the valley being opened up and a good road made, for although they are now able to get a much better market for almost their only produce, *ghee* or clarified butter, and although life is now easier for them in many ways, still bad communications had for the upper classes among them many advantages. They were much more able to do what "they dam pleased," and though now far better off, they are more strictly supervised. In old days, when they wished to buy salt or sell their ghee, they were obliged to carry everything on their backs to the nearest bazaar, the village of Balakote, at the mouth of the valley,

but now the traders can go right up the valley to the very end and on into Gilgit without any difficulty.

When I first travelled in the valley, prices were absurd, thirty-five quarts of milk could be bought for R. 1, and a sheep cost from R. 1 to Rs. 2, 8 annas (for a very large one) at the upper alps and grazing grounds, but now, though provisions cannot possibly be called expensive, they are nearly three times as dear as they were, on account of the opening up of the valley.

To refer back to my first dive into Kaghan in 1890, I could get very little information about the main valley, and virtually none about the side valleys, though more distant Kashmir and the adjoining Markhor districts of Karnal were well known. But it had been worth nobody's while to travel in Kaghan, as it was gameless. I had only fifteen days at my disposal, but managed to put in a most exciting trip. Not knowing anything of the country, I took the Survey map and went as direct as possible to the first snow peak marked. We followed the main valley for a long twenty-two miles' march of very hot and trying hill path, and managed to tumble one of our mules into the river. Most of his load caught on the way down, which was lucky, as it was chiefly provisions and cooking things in sacks. By night we arrived at the

forest bungalow of Malakandi, situated among fine deodar forests which hang on the hills above it—a great relief, as the general character of the march had been across steep and uninteresting hill-sides nearly bare of trees, very hot and shadeless, and steep enough to shut out the view up their sides, and almost, though not quite, up the main valley itself. The next morning the character of the country entirely changed. We left the main Kaghan Valley for the large Swati settlement in the Manoor Valley, and found ourselves immediately in far more interesting country. Before arriving at our branch road we had a really fine view of the striking Shikara peak at the head of the Shikara branch valley, and determined to get as close to it as we could. That march was uninteresting, and consisted chiefly in struggles with the mules, for the road was very bad again, and we took all day getting to our camp at the Bichala Kutta, only some six or seven miles. However, we were right among the mountains and among the most typical forest scenery in Kaghan, and therefore happy.

The headmen of the Manoor Swatis arrived from the village of Badalgraon the same evening, and guides were promised who would take me up in the surrounding mountains. Anywhere was good enough for me at that time. I just wanted

to get up high and see what I could. So on the arrival of the guides, one of no account, but the other a capital fellow, Fazl Ali by name, we arranged to get up as high as we could into the snowy peaks directly above the camp. Fazl Ali was then an oldish man, and subsequently in 1891 sent his son, who turned out by far the best Kaghani I have ever employed, and who travelled with me often afterwards till his death in 1898. Up to this time my mountaineering experience consisted of an ascent of the Wetterhorn, and being lost with a friend on a small peak above the Grimsel. On this occasion our mountaineering equipment was equally sketchy. My Goorkha orderly had an umbrella, I had an ice-axe, which weapon I had then never handled, and the Kaghani had a little forester's wood- and ice-axe combined, with a handle about two and a half feet long; we also had twenty-five feet of cotton rope.

Our camp was approximately 5500, the peak above approximately 16,000, the forest line is roughly 11,000 feet. We were quite happy to undertake this considerable proposition with a start at 5.30, and I expected to be down by night. These are the arrangements of beginners. I was young in those days, I had no real experience or knowledge, still I had wandered in the East End of London, I had actually seen a coster's barrow knocked

over by a four-wheeler, and luckily I had a good memory for words. Without these advantages and gifts, we should hardly have got through that jungle at the time we emerged, *i.e.* at 2 p.m. I had taken my own way in the morning, that is straight ahead, which led us through thick jungle and thick wet grass into the upper forest, and it was only after making a hopeless mess of it that I allowed Fazl Ali to take me the right way. However, we got out at last and on to a baby glacier, with a small schrund cutting us off from a ridge of rock which evidently led to the great ridge, some 3000 feet above us. Two of us fixed on to the twenty-five feet of cotton rope and passed Fazl Ali over, and we were soon making our way to the ridge, which was as rotten as possible, with lots of melting snow and the sun beating full upon it. There were too many tumbling stones altogether for any of us, and we beat a retreat as fast as we could. My Goorkha orderly was a poor specimen, and I didn't like the loose stones at all, so Fazl Ali had his work cut out. It was not surprising, therefore, that in leaving the rock-ridge for the snow-slope which took us to our ridge over the schrund, we should both have slipped and pulled Fazl Ali with us. Luckily we went straight to the bridge, and easily missed the schrund, only to be missed in our turn, as we picked ourselves up in the snow

below, by a quite respectable thing in rocks which had a real "sitter" at us. Immediately after this incident I made an attempt to break the record for down-hill running. The snow below was easy and safe, and we did a meritorious performance. But we hadn't yet quite finished. We were well in the forest when it got dark, and we had no food and no matches, and it began to drizzle, so we spent a cheerful night and arrived at ten o'clock the next morning at Badalgraon, "so meek and mild, so ready for any impression," as I once heard a missionary describe a fellow-worker. I wonder if any one ever made a greater number of idiotic mistakes all at once than we made that day. Still, it was quite a little beginning—and luckily not quite a little ending. Later on we continued our exploration up the valley through charming country, and tried one more little peak, of no real difficulty or particular height, but I developed mountain sickness through having tried to race a big active hill-man, who had joined us, for the first 3000 feet. When he offered me a very dirty raw onion as a cure when I was at my worst, I remember I beat him on the nose. I was light-hearted in those days. Since this expedition I have had many and varied wanderings in those hills, usually for short periods, and have often taken the opportunity to traverse them on my way either on shooting or travelling

trips, both going and returning. But I am glad to say that I have never chanced things again as I did that first time, for although the Kaghan mountains are generally well behaved, they have also a vulgar way of throwing stones at any one who is light-heartedly careless of his work.

We finished our trip by crossing and re-crossing the Shikara Pass, or rather twin passes, leading from Kaghan into the Droua district of Kashmir. This pass lies at the foot of the Shikara peak, separating it from the group of twelve Raji Bogee peaks, two of which we had attempted to climb. It is quite Alpine in character, and though quite easy, is steep.

After the return of my regiment from active service on the frontier in 1891, I found myself once again in Manoor. We had several minor scramblings and much search for ibex on the most southerly snow peaks of the Nila, and here I was joined by the aforementioned Hebat Khan. We had poor sport, but at any rate took away from Kaghan the reproach that it held no ibex, for we saw a considerable amount, but, alas! only one really shootable head, which eluded us. We crossed the range back and fore, and worked hard. An altogether interesting but unremarkable trip, with the exception of two days' looking for game in the great Jamghur precipices, which are very steep and diffi-

cult to find one's way about in. Here there is a small settlement of Gujars, who are quite wonderful in traversing their own country. They feed their flocks of goat and sheep all over these slopes, and are the only people who regularly do so, all travelling shepherds avoiding them as far as possible. I was told, and have since often heard, that fatal accidents are common, and I must say that it is not to be wondered at.

I did not return to Kaghan till 1894, but by that time had worked again in Switzerland, and with Sir Martin Conway in the Karakorams, and also for a year in the Chitral and Gilgit districts. By that time Chilas had been taken, and, as far as I remember, the Kaghan route was planned, if not started. I had further as my companion a most capable leader, Harkabir Thapa, now an accomplished mountaineer, besides one or two other men of my regiment, all quite reliable. We did one really good rock climb and some passes, and extended our knowledge of the country.

In the following year (1895) my wife accompanied me, the first English lady who had ever been high up in the valley, and I am quite certain the first that most of the inhabitants had ever seen. We made a most¹ comfortable camp in the Shikara Valley, and had a very active but non-ambitious

¹ On this point my wife and I hold different opinions.

existence, in perfect climate and scenery; still, though we were not ambitious, Harkabir accomplished a great performance. He and another Goorkha companion started out to explore one of the Raji Bogee peaks above our camp. They all look hard from this point, but he thought he had discovered a feasible route. His companion was taken ill and had to give in, so Harkabir continued by himself and finally succeeded in reaching the top. On his return he had great difficulties, for it was really too early in the season, just the end of May, and the snow had degenerated; the crampons which he wore were of very little use to him, and it was a very scared mountaineer who finally arrived in camp.

To show how safe the country was even at this time, my wife returned to Abbottabad alone, I having to fly over the passes to Kashmir to make arrangements for Mr. Mummery's expedition to Nanga Parbat, about which more will be told in a later chapter.

The actual road to Kashmir leads over the Shikara Pass into Kashmir territory, and cuts at right angles the Droua and Kishenganga Valleys, which have almost exactly the same character as Kaghan itself, though the first parts are possibly even finer. One of the most charming features of all these western Himalayan sub-Alpine valleys

is their forests, finer than I myself have seen anywhere in the Alps, and probably quite as fine as any Caucasian forests, excepting the great beech forests, which occur nowhere in the Himalaya. The extent of hill-side covered by them is immense, from approximately 4000 to 12,000 feet above sea-level. The scale of even minor valleys in the Himalaya is vast, and it is curious, when the snow has left the higher levels, how very little these great and often equably coloured hill-sides impress one by their size. It is only when one comes to climb them that one realises what a number of feet have to be climbed before one emerges above the forest line.

Kaghan is a playground and a training-ground, and near enough to civilisation to give one a first-rate circular scramble in fifteen or even ten days. Many of my most enjoyable trips have only lasted for a very few days. In this way it is distinctly analogous to the Alps as they were, for one can always in fifteen days arrive at peaks and passes of which no one knows anything. Though all the ordinary passes are in continual use by natives, it is still possible to make one's way backwards and forwards across the range by quite unknown ways. Such a trip I took in 1896, with Karbir as guide. We climbed two little points above the Bichala Valley of Manoor, and had intended to stay there

and do more. But the wandering spirit seized me, and away we went over the range to the top of the Droua Valley to a grass alp known as Töd Gali, my idea being to find my way over to the lakelet of Saifal Maluk in a side valley draining into Kaghan river. We could find no one who had been across, and indeed Hebat Khan, who, as usual, was with me, told us that he did not believe there was a way. We had some twelve or fifteen porters, all chosen by Hebat Khan, and quite ready to try, for Kaghan is not like the great mountains; supplies are always obtainable, and if one way won't do another always will, so they did not feel they were cutting far adrift from food.

We had a very dull walk through fine scenery. This sounds a contradiction in terms, but is not so at all. Continual walking over stones and up scree slopes is more than dull, no matter what the scenery, and the slopes were much worse than the scenery was fine. However, Shikara was evidently in front of us, and an unpleasant rock-throwing scrubby mountain on our right, and we finally arrived at the pass between the two, and into really interesting surroundings. We had a fine view of Shikara, and also of the eastern face of the one real Kaghan giant, Mali by name, very rough and wicked looking, right to our front. We were less pleased to find that we were cut off from our valley by

another pass, low enough indeed, and easy enough, but still involving another ascent. The real question was how to get the coolies down the hundred feet or so of very steep and icy slope that led us on to the glacier, which we had to cross to reach the second pass. Kaghannies are neither clothed nor booted for ice. They have probably never seen a succession of even twenty steps cut up and down a steep face, and further, they really dislike crevasses, of which they have a needless and inherited dread. They would much rather carry loads down a really awkward rock passage than cross half-a-dozen perfectly simple crevasses. It is more or less new to them, and all simple folk dread what is new and unaccustomed. Our descent was at first over a rapidly shelving steep snow slope, and then fifty feet of what was practically ice at a good steep angle, but with comfortable snow on the glacier below. But in order to get to a convenient angle steps had to be cut diagonally across a small schrund and over a very substantial snow ridge, which could not be seen from the top. We halted our coolies and put out about 150 feet of rope. We then descended over the ridge to the edge of the ice slope, cut an immense step, and then did a lightning sitting glissade into the snow below. The coolies were passed down one by one by a Goorkha left for the purpose on top of the big step. They didn't like it very

much, though it was quite easy for them. Once there, they were invited by another Goorkha to rest, and before they had time to be afraid a gentle push from behind landed them scared but comfortably at the bottom, where we fielded them. They were quite upset, but soon revived, and several requested to be re-conducted up to repeat the process. We had, during the following days, many good looks at Mali, and saw several ways up, all quite easy to do when one is perfectly certain that one won't be called upon to try one of them.

Pleasant as the side valleys are, they have their disadvantages; there are no roads, and hardly any paths, and travelling is not luxurious. The luxurious traveller sticks to the main route to Chilas, and lives in the comfortable bungalows of the Public Works Department. And he might do very much worse. The valley itself opens out considerably as it rises, and two marches beyond the village of Kaghan, the local capital, forest is almost entirely left behind. The climate is really fine, but the scenery, though large and rugged, is rather ugly; the mountain forms are without character, and the interest to one who has seen much mountain country rather lies in the masses of wild flowers and the really remarkably fine climate than in the actual surroundings themselves. The head of the valley, at the foot of the Babnsar Pass, is,

however, quite interesting. It is, to all intents and purposes, a Pamir. The near hills are insignificant grass-covered mounds, but there is a wideness and a Pamir-like and down-like appearance which is unexpected, and further, there is the great mass of the Nanga Parbat group immediately in one's front, and the knowledge that once across the easy neighbouring passes one is sure of the finest shikar country in the Himalaya. Beyond the blockhouse of Gittidas (for, as one nears the Kohistan and Chilas frontier the comfortable bungalows become defensible block-houses) marmots abound. Where the valley opens out they simply swarm. I used to try to stalk between them and their holes when they were feeding. On the one or two occasions in which I was partially successful, their indignation was most amusing.

At this time I was travelling with Captain Browne of my regiment. I may introduce him by saying that, from a travelling point of view, this officer is nearly as unprincipled as I am myself. He has also an appearance of venerable respectability which attracts confidence in his dealings with the indigenons inhabitants of these wild parts. But, hard as we tried, all my powers of persuasion, and even the natural respect caused by my companion's trustworthy and venerable appearance, could not induce any of the local people to take us over the

range into the forbidden Chilas valleys. Further, our attempts to induce shikaries and parties from the other side were even less successful, for had not a shikari received a month's imprisonment the year before for the very same thing? And had not the parties been fined? However, we were determined to go, and there was only one way, *i.e.* to carry our own camp. Our three Goorkhas and our two selves finally crossed into the Niat Valley, with outfit for a week. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves—chiefly because we knew we oughtn't to be there. But from a sporting point of view our enterprise was quite hopeless. The scale of the valleys is huge, and they are very long; and it was evident that the part of the valley we were in held little or no game. The only incident we had was a chase after a red bear, which I fired at and missed, for one cannot run and scramble uphill rapidly at 14,000 feet, and then shoot straight. Moving our camp back was not so enjoyable as taking it in. In fact, we returned well beaten and very tired.

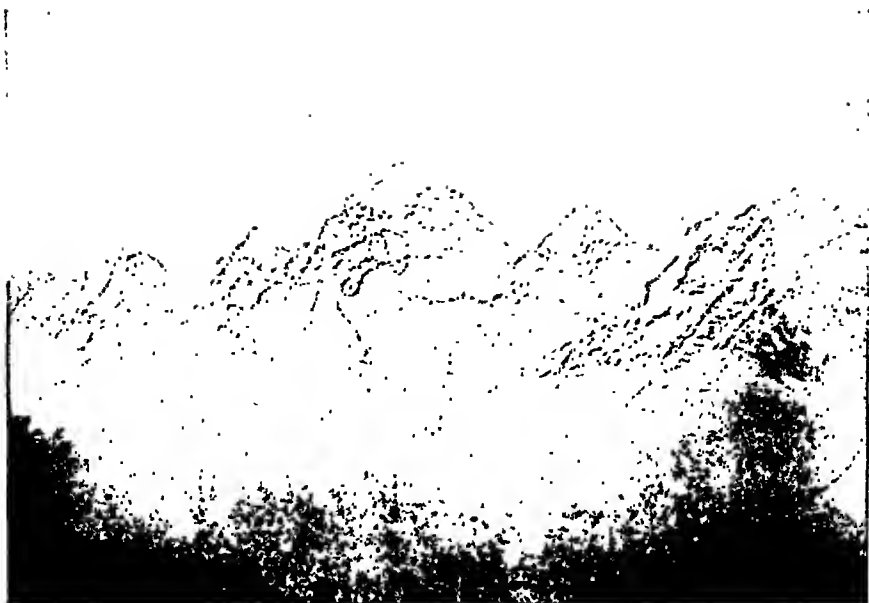
We made one or two other unauthorised attempts at shooting in places we had no business to be in that season, with a minimum of shooting success but with a maximum of real enjoyment. We lived quite hard, and it really made one feel that one was exploring, whereas, of course, we were never more than a couple of days from the lap of

luxury, *i.e.* the main camp, presided over by my wife. This was delightful ; but for first-class enjoyment nothing could beat the epicurean progress made through the best bits of Kaghan scenery by Mr. Mumm and myself in 1907.

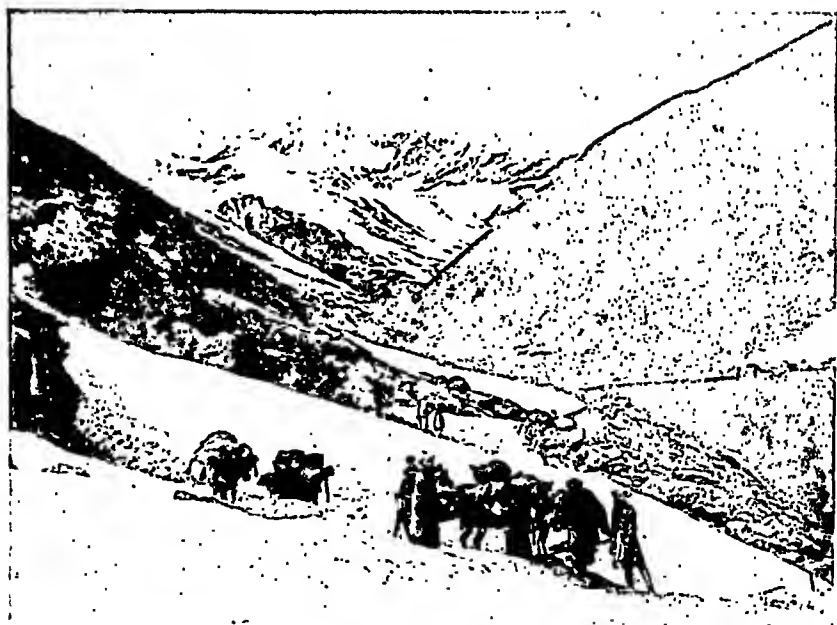
We had spent all the summer in Garhwal, a hard country to travel in, and in midsummer a wet one. When the weather quite broke we were in despair. There were so many months left at our disposal for mountaineering. I whispered, "Let us fly to Kashmir and sunshine." The suggestion was simply sprung at, and away we went direct from Māna on the main chain of the central Himalaya—a journey of at least 800 miles,—depression leaving us at every stage. But the cussedness of things in general did its best to stop us on our way. We were drenched every day ; we were nearly martyred by a gang of coolies with M'Adam stones, and nearly killed with hospitality in Almora and Naini Tal. Finally, a coolie tried to wreck our train with his body on our way to Pindi, though, luckily for all parties, without success. We struggled through all obstacles, even an injured toe, which I had nearly damaged for good in Almora, quite recovering itself. We found perfect weather in Kashmir, climbed nearly all the peaks of Haramuk, and finally trekked across country through the beautiful Lolab Valley

and the Kishenganga and Droua Valleys, to my old camp in Tōd Gali.

Shikara and Mali were our objects, and I proposed to cross *via* my old pass made in 1896 to Saiful Maluk. However, I kept too much to the north, and after another rather dull and very trying walk over scree and bad snow arrived at the top of another and new pass, separated from Shikara by the unpleasant mountain mass which I have mentioned. We had a most sporting descent to the glacier. As I said before, it was an epicurean expedition; we had everything that mortal travellers could wish for except a copy of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. We had even two geese and ducks, and we were enjoying ourselves to an extent which mere words cannot convey. The descent to the glaciers before mentioned was some four hundred feet over snow-slopes at a steep angle, and across some few not very formidable crevasses. There was also some ice to be negotiated. It really was quite a serious undertaking for so large a party, but Inderbinnen, our Swiss guide, engineered the descent most creditably. Cutting large soup plates until the really steep snow-slopes began, we then fixed two hundred feet of rope to a rock, leaving one of our Goorkhas to look after it; and the men were passed down and finally convoyed over the crevasses at the bottom. But this manœuvre



MALI PARBAT KAGHAN.



MULES IN UPPER KAGHAN.

took some time, and we were obliged to camp in moraine, there not being time to negotiate the second pass that night. It also began to snow and blow, and we had a wild night. It was late in September, and Kaghan up high is very cold then, as we were later on to learn. The next day we set out with trepidation. We were behind our time, and the relief expedition with more luxuries was in front. We, or rather, I think, chiefly I, were filled with misgivings that it might have given us up for lost: and although we were fairly well supplied with the necessaries of life, such as champagne, etc., we were now so accustomed to luxuries that the mere chance of missing the relief expedition filled us with horror. I must mention again that this was an epicurean trip. We did eventually find it, however, and nothing was able to upset us—not even the loss of the last goose, who proudly walked out of camp at six o'clock in the evening without leave, and was never seen again. We had bad weather again that night, but we didn't care if it snowed!

I am not certain that that snow was not a blessing in disguise. It quite put any chance of climbing Mali out of the question at any rate from that side; and as we had not very much time left we could not go to the north or Matta Kundi side. We therefore turned our attention

to Shikara. We had had a really very fine view of it on our journey to Saifal Maluk, and Inderbinnen had seen his way up. It was, in fact, unmistakable, the obvious and only. We therefore returned with a light camp to the top of our secondary pass, and spent a very pleasant but rather chilly night there.

The next morning's climb has been lately described by Mr. Mumm in his book, *Five Months in the Himalaya*. To me it was a most interesting expedition, as for years I had been looking at this peak and wondering whether I should ever have a chance of tackling it. It is one of the most conspicuous and beautiful sights on the main road up Kaghan during the second stage of the journey, and often looks very formidable from below. There was no doubt about the route, but there was about the state of the snow; and we suffered considerably from cold, too, though it was a perfectly still day, and a bright sun was shining the whole time. I think it would have been nearly impossible for any one to have climbed steep rocks continuously, even with the sun out, in that temperature. This more than ever reconciled us to the fact that Mali was out of reach, for on that mountain we should have had to spend many hours in the shade on steep rocks, and no one's hands could have stood it. There were one or two rather ticklish snow ques-

tions, but Moritz Inderbinnen made no mistake and was quite confident. There was one extremely narrow snow *arête* at a very steep angle, quite a little question to descend; altogether a most interesting day. From the summit we had an excellent view of the Raji Bogeas and the neighbouring ridge, and on the other side of the Shikara Pass, at our feet on the southern side, I was able to show Mumm the last of these peaks (of which there are at least twelve), on the summit of which, in 1898, some twelve of us, myself and a party of Goorkhas, had been caught in a thunderstorm in late September, and four or five men had been struck by lightning. That was quite a day to be remembered. We were trying to traverse the last of the Raji Bogeas from Töd Gali to the Shikara Valley, and had a very amusing but not difficult climb to the top, where we were caught in the storm. We had to beat a retreat in awful weather, and did not get to the nearest houses till twelve midnight. We spent a very chilly night on the roof of a house. Another day of awful weather followed. Our food consisted of Indian corn porridge—for the villagers were all away, and our camp had previously crossed the Shikara Pass the day we attempted our traverse. On this day Harkabir gave another exhibition of his talent

for locality. He brought us off at top speed in thick and howling weather over ground none of us had previously seen. He knew his points, but the natural guiding instinct, which took him by the shortest and easiest route in rather awkward ground and thick weather, was quite remarkable. Karbir was not to the fore. He was one of the unfortunates, and had been struck on the head, so that he was not fit for the work of a leader.

It may be as well for me to impress on those who have never experienced a thunderstorm at high elevation that they must not think being struck by lightning at a height is the same thing as being struck in the lowlands. In the former one is at the gathering of the storm. Directly the ice axes begin to hum they should at once be put away. A lightning stroke is like a blow from a stick. It may not always be serious, but it is always unpleasant. On this occasion one of the men who was struck did not properly recover the use of his arm for thirty-six hours afterwards.

In concluding this account of an insignificant Himalayan valley let me point out again the fact that though the climate is probably second to none in India, this valley will remain a minor valley in every way. It will attract few sportsmen, if any, and few travellers. There are many more beautiful valleys farther afield, and though very easy to

travel in, there are few amusements except to the wanderer. I doubt very much if even the much-talked-of railway to Kashmir will change it, and I hope not. It will remain like the lesser valleys of the Alps, quite charming in its way, and still more attractive, to my mind, in its lack of too many charms, for it cannot become hackneyed. It is, for the Himalaya, commonplace, and unattractive to the average traveller, and it is my own particular playground.

One last reason which may explain in part why I like it so much : it has large stretches of bracken fern.

CHAPTER VII

GILGIT DISTRICT AND BALTISTAN

THE year 1891 was a disturbed one on the Indian Frontier, both east and west, but by the summer things seemed to have settled down into the normal condition of the hot weather. During this summer I heard that Sir Martin Conway, as he is now, intended to bring an exploring party out to the Hindu Koosh and Karakoram Himalaya. An excellent lunch made me daring, and I there and then applied personally to be allowed to join him. At that time I suffered from recurrent attacks of malarial fever, and in the autumn the doctors sent me to England on six months' sick leave. Nothing could have been more opportune, though by going home I missed a possible chance of taking part in the operations in Gilgit against the Hunza-Nagyr tribes. Still, one cannot have everything in this world, and a winter spent in England and Switzerland entirely set me up in health, and also allowed me to make Sir M. Conway's acquaintance and that of the other members of the party who were

to accompany him. I also took the opportunity of introducing one of the Goorkhas of my regiment to snow and ice work under the instruction of the guide Mathias Zurhriggen, who has since made such a name for himself as a travelling guide. The said Goorkha, Parbir Thapa by name, a first-rate hillman, but rather too light-hearted for mountaineering, that is, serious mountaineering (please refer to the Badminton library and numerous other handbooks on the subject for a definition), enjoyed himself to the full, and I am not likely to forget one of his amusements in Zermatt. It was the beginning of December and the weather was very bad. Parbir built himself a little "sangar" at the corner of the Monte Rosa Hotel, and when he had stored it with sufficient snowballs, opened on the villagers as they passed. The Zermatters in the winter by the evening are usually fairly pleased with things in general; the row penetrated into the hotel; my friends and I ran out, and, seeing what had happened, joined in. We had a first-rate hour.

I think I may say that Sir M. Conway's was the first carefully prepared expedition that went to India, both in the matter of carefully selected stores and scientific arrangements of all kinds. It was more an exploring than a purely mountaineering expedition, although a considerable amount of climbing was got through.

Grahame's expedition, successful as it was from a purely climbing point of view, was not equipped for really lengthy expeditions, whereas the fault of the Conway expedition was that it was considerably over-stored and over-equipped, a fault on the right side, however. Conway made also another most interesting departure; he included among our companions Mr. M'Cormick, an artist of singularly sympathetic and versatile capacity; for the first time the Himalayan world was intimately painted by a capable hand. Our route led us direct to Gilgit by the usual way, but early in the year, for we crossed in quite early April, and found the Rajdiangan Pass from Kashmir into Gurais still deep in snow. This was (1892) before the present road was made, in fact it was being made at the time.

The main caravan marched by the Burzil Pass, but on arrival at Geshiart, Zurbriggen and myself determined to try for a red bear, and therefore crossed the Kamri Pass, intending to rejoin Conway at Astor. We crossed the Kamri in the night with a very light camp, no tents, in fact, and made a very long march of some sixteen hours, seeing no less than three red bears on the way. An unpleasant night was spent in the open, but as we had waterproof sleeping-bags we got off fairly well in spite of incessant rain and sleet. Zurbriggen was out shooting all next day, and a red bear was

missed; we then marched straight off to Bunji via Astor, climbing through the rocks on the Hatoor Pir, where the road was then being cut out; three days of very interesting walking. The Gilgit agency was at this time in a state of great activity; the frontier, so to speak, being made, Kashmir or Imperial authority being consolidated, the Hunza Nagyr troubles were finished and temporary peace gave time for development; not that the local troubles were over by any means, Chilas had not yet been annexed, nor had the Chitral question been settled; two and a half years were yet required before the tribes of the Hindu Koosh understood the meaning of the "Pax Britannica."

The confines of the Gilgit district contain parts of the Hindu Koosh, the Karakoram, and the western end of the Himalaya, which finishes up in a way thoroughly worthy of this marvellous range in the great Nanga Parbat group, which is the actual western end of the Himalaya as established by geographers for purposes of definition only, I suppose, for the Indus is its boundary and Nanga Parbat drops 24,000 feet direct into the river. Opposite is the range of the Hindu Raj, a noble range, if it were not dwarfed by the giant opposite; but who gave it this hopeless name and what does it mean? If the range could only understand, how very annoyed it would be. I wonder if any one

now living in this district knows it by this name; I most sincerely hope not. Why Hindu? and why Raj?

Sir Martin Conway describes the whole district as a crumpled Sahara; Zurbriggen, as a country to see, but not to live in. Conway's description at first sight seems very apt, and yet, hidden away at the right height, are quite large forests; and, in fact, anywhere where water can be brought the ground produces plentifully; possibly if there was water available the Sahara would be equally productive. Zurbriggen, however, is right; infinitely grander than Kashmir, it is also very often infinitely ugly, though the ugliness is often impressive; but not even the prodigiousness of the peaks can make amends for the equally prodigious ugliness of the valleys with, in summer, their horrid heat and discomfort; and indeed the heat of the Indus Valley in the neighbourhood of Chilas in July compares with the heat of the Punjab plains.

We arrived in Gilgit at the beginning of May with our whole outfit, and were most excellently entertained by Colonel A. G. Durand and the garrison in general. Notwithstanding the heat of the valleys, already quite sufficient, it was too early to start for our real objective, which was the passage of the great Hispar glacier leading from Nagyr into Baltistan. So we spent a most

interesting month in the Bagrote Valley. Not that we did no exploration or climbing. We did a great deal, both of examining the mountains and mapping by the surveyor of the party, Conway, and climbing also; but the condition of the great mountains was awful; avalanches were falling continually all round us, and although minor peaks up to 16,000 feet were safe enough, the snow on the great peaks and ridges was in a most unstable condition. Our valley roughly runs parallel with the Hunza Nagyr Valley and south of it. So that we had on our left hand when mounting the valley the great Rakapushi peak, one of the most beautiful sights imaginable, 25,550 feet high, and also innumerable peaks on the great ridge which forms the southern boundary of the Hunza Nagyr Valley. From the head of our valley a pass should lead over on to the Chogohingma glacier of Baltistan, since explored by Dr. Hunter and Mrs. Bullock Workman; how far there is a possible pass I am unable to say, though there appeared to be some chance of one to the north of the snow cone of Dubummi; a mere dwarf of 20,000 feet or so, but beautifully shaped.

It is very hard to describe or give my idea of the whole scale of this country; when, once the Burzil Pass has been crossed, Alpine senses must be left behind, one must readjust. Garhwal is big

enough in all conscience, but is crushed together; here everything is on a generous scale, and the mountain structure is infinitely greater. On arrival in the country to educate one's sense of scale, an hour spent on the Hattoo Pir, at the point where the old Gilgit track begins to descend on its way to Bhunji, will be very well laid out. The Hattoo Pir is a ridge in the Nanga Parbat *massif*, roughly 10,000 feet above sea-level, directly overlooking the Indus. It stands as clear of the surrounding mountains as any point in such a country can be expected to do. Facing north one sees the whole Bhunji plain at one's feet, 6000 feet below; the great peaks of the Hindu Koosh and Karakoram, Rakapushi, and Haramosh; and directly *en face* a great rock wall of infinite steepness rising 10,000 feet without a break from the river, and the mountains of Ghor, etc. Behind us, to the south, the Shelter and Ditchel ridges and markhor grounds, topped by the great Ditchel and Kiniburi peaks. The view is huge and savage and one of the most impressive sights in the world—a desperate country.

There are compensations for everything in this world, and trying as a long residence in Gilgit can be, it has great attractions for the sportsman, for there is no better sporting country in the Himalaya and Hindu Koosh; ibex, markhor, and oorial, and shapoo, snow leopard and red bear are all



THE MOUNTAIN OF THE HUNZA VALLEY



RAKATI-HI FROM HUNZA.

obtainable, while the chickore partridge shooting is quite excellent in places. Also the people are good to deal with and to live among, and are as a lot most sporting. Every village of any size has its polo ground, which is the national game of the Hindu Koosh, whilst the first-rate Gilgit shikari has no superior; he is head and shoulders, in his own country, above the best Kashmiri I have seen. The people in general are very hard and enduring, undoubtedly a case of the survival of the fittest, as I fancy weakly babies have very little chance of surviving infancy. They are accustomed both on foot and pony-back to travel prodigious distances over very trying country. As an instance, during my residence in Gilgit in 1893 the Hunza Nagyr levies, a local organization formed after the Hunza Nagyr Valley had been annexed, were hurriedly summoned to Gilgit; they were collected during the day, many of them having to come some distance to the place of assembly, and then marched straight to Gilgit, arriving in forty hours over a most broken road and a distance of 65 miles.

To return to Bagrote, among other efforts we, as I have said before, managed to climb a couple of small points, both excellent practice. I personally only took part in one of these expeditions, but on that occasion we climbed on two ropes, and

Zurbriggen was able to see how much trust he could put in our four Goorkhas; this was quite valuable, as one of them had to be sent back afterwards, his substitute, who came up from Gilgit to replace him, being Karbir Burathoki, who has since made such a great name for himself. In those days he had not come to his full strength, though he subsequently did well on all occasions. The most important expedition we attempted was an exploration to find a way, if we could, over the range to the north. If we had been able to do so, we should have descended direct into the Nagyr Valley, and not very far from Nagyr itself. I have no doubt that such a pass could be made, but for us it was quite out of the question, the mountain being in a most dangerous condition.

Our high main camp we named Windy Camp, and we spent some days there, and it was from here that we made the attempt—Conway, myself, Zurbriggen, and the three Goorkhas forming the party. Our way lay over the Gargo glacier, and when leaving the glacier to skirt the mountain-side to join the route we had previously explored, the Goorkhas and myself had a most unpleasant experience; we were crossing a snow gully near its bottom, after having negotiated some considerable crevasses at its foot, when we heard shouts both from Conway, who was on ahead with Zurbriggen

and had crossed before us, and also from a Kashmir shikari who was on the glacier; we were unable to make out what was said, but we soon found out, for there was a roar at the head of the gully, and, looking up, we saw what was apparently the head of an avalanche coming straight down on to us. With one accord we turned and fled down the gully; it was not too steep, and we took the crevasses near the bottom in our flight. I don't know how broad they really were, but I wouldn't have jumped them in cold blood for any money; fright, however, made us spring like chamois. We arrived safely on to some clear rolling ice, and then the wind of the avalanche caught us and rolled us over like rabbits and drove snow-dust through our thick clothes as if they were made of muslin. When we came to, we could none of us speak for two or three minutes, and then we all asked each other where the avalanche had got to. It turned out that the avalanche had fallen from a very great height, but that the main body of the snow had tumbled into and been caught in a large glacier some 1000 feet above us, and it was simply the dust and wind that had come down the gully after us.

We had further experience with avalanches before we had finished this expedition. After a long and tiring walk up very steep snow-slopes, all

bearing marks of fallen snow, we found a sheltered spot under some steep rocks which was not only sheltered in itself but safe from direct bombardment from above. Platforms for the numerous tents had to be cut out of the ice and frozen snow, the Goorkhas dispensing with tents and sleeping under tarpaulins. While we were digging, Zurbriggen explored some 1000 feet higher and reported the route feasible if the mountain was in good condition; shortly after his return we heard a tremendous roar above us, and although we were safe enough, I think every one snuggled up to our friendly cliff as near as he could get. A few moments later the gully, 20 yards to our left, which Zurbriggen had lately crossed, was filled with a great snow avalanche, and tumbled in and out of it were the bodies of three ibex which had been caught by the snow up above. The avalanche finally threw out one of the bodies some 300 feet below. Away went Zurbriggen to secure it, followed by a Goorkha; he had to cross the avalanche track to get into sheltered ground. Now snow over which a big avalanche has passed is rendered very hard and slippery, but little removed from ice. Zurbriggen was, of course, quite at home, but to the Goorkha following, this sort of thing was new, and away went his feet and down the avalanche tract he slid for 300 feet, finally lighting

on a big lump of frozen snow, which threw him out into some soft stuff on the side into safety. He came back again very cheerful but sore; he had lost most of his finger-nails. Finally the weather broke and we had to beat a retreat; the ibex was brought in in the morning by two of the Goorkhas, who again had some difficulty with an avalanche. The Gilgit giants in May are no place for anybody.

The time had now come to start for our Hispar Pass, especially as we intended to spend some time in the neighbourhood of Nagyr.

Can anything be more striking than the march up the Hunza river? I cannot imagine that there can be a more tremendous valley. The earlier marches are ugly to a degree, but such ugliness is always striking and impressive. It is the Hindu Koosh at its finest, typical of the whole range, having all the good points and all the bad of an Hindu Koosh valley. The first two marches to Nomal and Chalt on foot in the hot months are horrible, the heat and glare very trying; it is not quite as unpleasant to ride, as when riding one sometimes can feel that one is making some impression on the scenery, so to speak; after hours the bend in the river, which in the morning looked quite close, certainly has got a little closer; when one is walking it never does, it remains the same distance off for ever: a midsummer march anywhere in the

low parts of the Hindu Koosh valleys will produce the weariest cuss words known to the English language. There is so little vegetation in the valleys, except actually in the villages, that the sun is often very trying at an elevation of even 10,000 feet. This applies equally to the Hindu Koosh and to Baltistan. In the winter the sun certainly does not bother one; it is most welcome.

Though this valley appears so desolate, it is simply a matter of water, as it is anywhere in these regions; wherever water can be carried and wherever land can be irrigated, it is most productive, and the natives of the country are adepts in their primitive forms of agriculture. Space, wherever water can be taken to, and so made productive, is never wasted; and many of their water canals and channels are very cleverly executed when one takes into consideration that they were made by a people who had very little iron at their command, and practically no spare powder for blasting; of course since the Kashmir or British occupation of Hunza there had been a great advance, trained officers and engineers being available.

Six marches take one to either Hunza or Nagyr, the two statelets occupying the valley. They are, to all intents and purposes, one, now friendly rivals, though until the conquest of both tribes in 1891 anything but friendly rivals; in fact they were

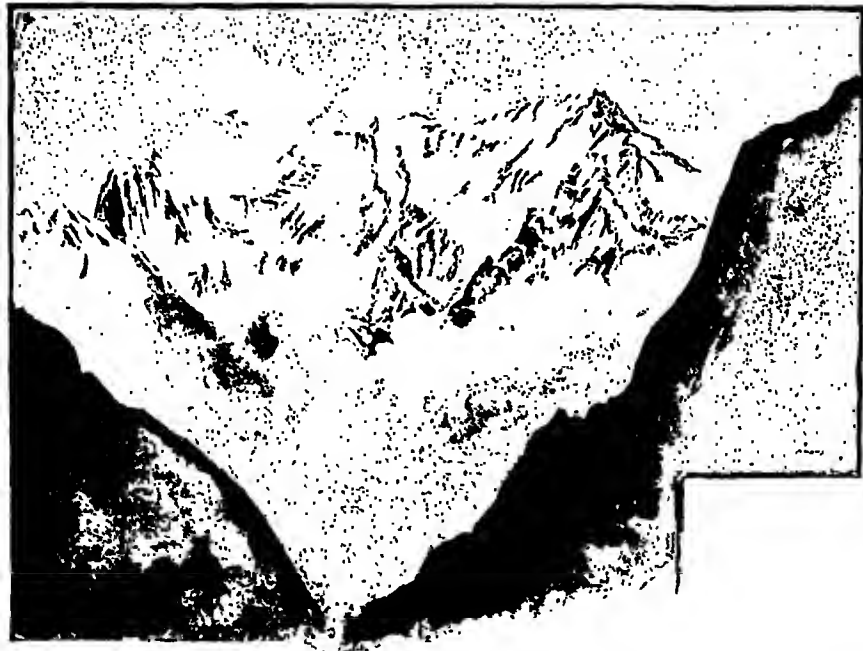
always fighting, nor even did they always combine against the foreign enemy. They are by extraction of the same races as the other inhabitants of the Gilgit district, either belonging to the Yeshkun or to the Shinaki races; though the extra hard life that they have led for generations has made them harder and more manly, a true survival of the fittest. They are in fact a very pleasant race to deal with, and I think nearly every one who has had dealings with them likes them and admires them too. The Hunza men are, generally speaking, the better of the two, and this was accounted for to me by one of themselves in a very sensible manner. It was simply that they lived on the sunny side of the valley and therefore were much more active in winter, while the Nagyris, who get next door to no sun in the winter, shut themselves up and get lazy and supine in consequence; this by comparison only, be it understood, as neither of the tribes is a lazy people. With a little better food, I fancy, they would be very energetic in all ways.

The bulk of the Hunza people belong to the Maulai sect of Mohammedanism, and therefore are supposed to owe allegiance to His Highness the Aga Khan, who is the hereditary head of the sect. The Nagyris are almost to a man Shiah Mohammedans, though neither are in the least fanatical. This difference of religion and the struggle for food may

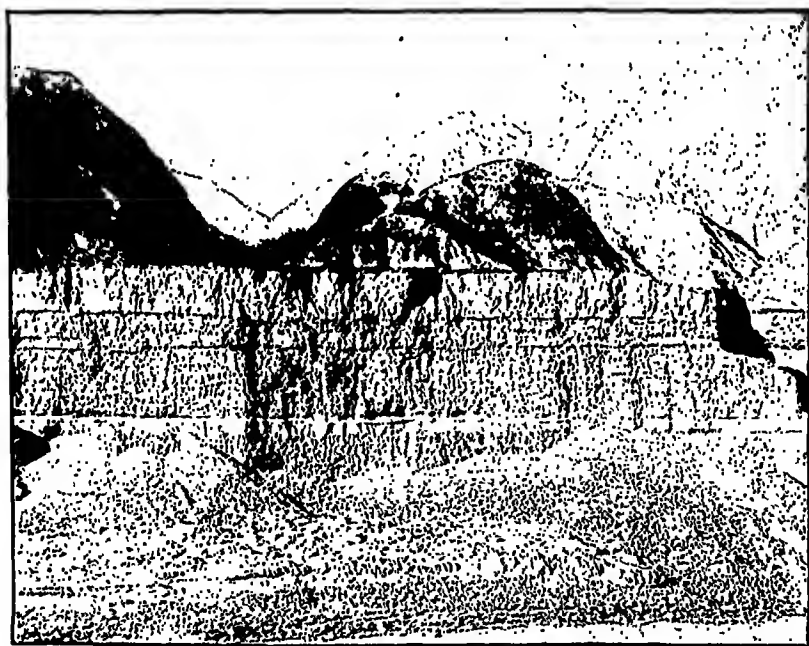
have occasioned the enmity of former years. Nagyr itself is situated on a branch of the Hunza river, whereas the main Hunza river flows down from the Kilik Pass through the upper part of the Hunza Valley, here known as Kanjut.

Hunza itself is marvellously situated. It is a collection of several villages, and occupies alluvial slopes, ending in cliffs of some 500 feet in height dropping into the river. Its capital is the Raja or Tham's Castle of Baltit. No Roi des Montagnes could want a more magnificent situation for his castle. Looking down the valley, one has an unsurpassable view of Mount Rakapushi, in itself a snow peak which from this point can bear comparison with any snow peak in Asia, except possibly Siniolchum in the eastern Himalaya; but Rakapushi is helped greatly by its foreground. Hunza is quite twenty miles from its base in a straight line, and enjoys a view of 18,000 to 19,000 feet of its elevation.

Directly overhanging Baltit Fort itself is the prodigious group of Boiohaghurdooanasur (which I am told means, in Burishushki, "where only the horse of a demon can go," a three-headed ferocious group, savage and repellent, and from a mountaineering point of view almost hopeless—at least such is my impression. Its size can hardly be taken in by the spectator from Hunza, which is approximately 7000 feet above sea-level, as the



BOIOHAGHURDOOANASUR : HINZA.



GILGIT RIVER BANK ENTRANCE TO BAGROTE NULLAH WITH MT. DEOBUNNI.

monster rises for at least 16,000 feet directly above his head. But these views by no means end the outlook ; on the Nagyr bank, at the head of the Nagyr Valley, the beautiful pyramid known as the Golden Pari (cliff), from the yellow and glittering appearance of the precipices facing Hunza when the sun is on them, is seen, and again at the head of the Samayar Valley, the crown of Dirran and other peaks, about whose bases we had been exploring when we were in the Bagrote Valley. It is hopeless to give a picture of such mountains, the hugest mountain sculpturing on the globe ; affording the greatest contrast of hideousness and beauty and wildness. One wonders more and more how a primitive people could have lived there, and still have developed, for so many generations, considering the tremendous hardness of their former life ; for they have developed. The Hunza and Nagyr people can by no means be ranked as a savage race ; they are very far indeed removed from that.

In old days, once the rope bridges between Hunza and Nagyr were cut, there could be no communication between the two banks. An excellent story is told of how, during the many quarrels with the Kashmir Government, who held the Gilgit country for a considerable number of years before interest was taken in that country by the British,

the Kashmiris and Nagyris combined against Hunza. The Hunza men promptly cut all the rope bridges, and thinking themselves secure marched in force down their own bank to meet the Kashmiris at Chalt. There they engaged them and beat them. They then heard that the Nagyris had crossed their own branch river, had crossed also the steep tongue of mountain dividing the two rivers, and were rapidly constructing a bridge above Hunza. The Hunza men had some thirty miles to run after their labours of beating the Kashmir troops, over the roughest of mountain tracks ; they not only accomplished this, but caught the Nagyris at a disadvantage, beat them, and took prisoner nearly the whole of their force. Now they did not want to keep them prisoners and feed them, they had scarcely enough food for themselves ; nor did they want to make an end of them, as they had been relations and enemies for so many years ; so they just stripped them of arms and clothing and sent them home absolutely in a state of nature. This was considered far more shameful to the Nagyris than if they had all been killed in the fight.

Both tribes were raiders of necessity, but the head of the Nagyr Valley leads to nothing but snow and ice mountains ; their only outlet was towards Gilgit, and raiding in that direction did not pay much, whereas the Hunza men had an outlet to the north

on to the Pamirs *via* the Kanjut valley and either the Kilik or Mintaka Passes. For years they raided the trade routes from Leh to Yarkhand, as well as the flocks of the Kurghiz shepherds on the Pamirs themselves.

A journey of two hundred miles out and two hundred back was thought little of, and when the character of the country is considered, and that perforce they carried their own supplies, I think it says wonders for their strength and stamina. It was the nuisance of their raiding habits and their continual quarrels with the Kashmir authorities which brought about the loss of the independence of both tribes in 1891. They were, as is easily understood of a people so shut off from the world, intensely ignorant, and their leaders ludicrously proud of their position and power. Sir F. Young-husband relates of the Tham of Hunza, how, when he asked him why he did not go down to Kashmir or to India and see a little of other countries, the Tham answered, "Great kings like Alexander, Cyrus, and myself never leave their dominions." Alexander, it must be understood, is the one great historical personage known and remembered by every one, though, beyond his reputation as a great mythical hero, I fancy they have little idea of who he really was.

The forces at the disposal of the Kashmir

authorities were very different from the old irregular corps who had formerly been sent to garrison Gilgit; those corps were almost without discipline or training, badly officered and fed, and badly armed, and I think, considering their wretched condition and the difficulty and length of the road connecting them with their base, that it is remarkable what they put up with. In those days the road to Gilgit was but a hill track, just passable for mules and ponies under good conditions of weather. However, when Colonel A. G. Durand, the British Resident in Gilgit, was ordered in combination with the Kashmir authorities to settle with the Hunza Nagyr tribes, things were in a very different condition. Six regiments of Kashmir Imperial Service Infantry and a Mountain Battery as well, had been formed, and trained under the supervision of British officers; they were a great contrast to the old corps, were well disciplined, trained and armed; their own officers, many of them men who had originally belonged to the old army, were much improved; the road to Kashmir, though not finished, was well advanced; and the provisioning of Gilgit undertaken by British Commissariat officers and their subordinates,—a very different state of affairs altogether.

In the autumn of 1891 Colonel Durand found himself able to dispose of a force of, roughly, three

battalions Imperial Service Infantry; a Kashmir Mountain Battery, reinforced by his own personal guard of the 20th Panjab Infantry, a regiment with a record of war service second to none; and a detachment of 200 men of the 1/5th Goorkha Rifles, sent on special duty. Beyond these corps, Messrs. Spedding & Mitchell, the contractors who were constructing the Kashmir-Gilgit road, formed irregular corps of their Pathan workmen, a cheerful lot of ruffians, for whom there was plenty of employment as pioneers.

Mr. E. F. Knight has told the story of the expedition admirably, of the Darband (shut door) of Nilt-Maiyún, of the blowing in of Nilt Fort, and of the subsequent scaling of the 'Tol heights by Lieutenant J. Manners Smith (now Lieutenant-Colonel J. Manners Smith, V.C., C.I.E., Resident in Nepal). Although the lower part of the Hunza Valley as far as Chalt had been acquired by the Kashmir Government, and although Chalt boasted a fort, the road to Gilgit was still a most primitive one, and it was with great difficulty that the few battery and transport mules could be got along it with their loads. The fort at Nilt, another march on, is most strongly situated, precipitous ground above and below, and the only approach a narrow semicircular path in full view of the fort. Nor is it possible to turn the position by the north bank,

the village of Maiyún having almost equal natural advantages. The actual storming of the Nilt Fort was a very gallant action; let me refer readers again to *Where Three Empires Meet* for an account of the action.

On the fall of Nilt the Hunza-Nagyr forces took up a secondary position immediately in rear, and a delay of three weeks occurred before a feasible means of turning them out was found. Behind the fort lies a deep and precipitous nullah, which, in the ordinary course of events, has to be crossed on the way up the valley. Its further bank is exceptionally precipitous and some 1500 feet in height. On these heights the enemy had placed a number of sangars which completely commanded the line of advance. Every means to pass them failed; an attempt was made at night to turn the enemy out of their position on the other side of the river at Maiyún, but was a failure. Finally a Dogra sepoy of one of the Kashmir Imperial Service regiments found a feasible route up the cliffs at night. A storming party was told off under Manners Smith, who successfully led his men on the early morning of December 23rd, three weeks after the fall of Nilt Fort; his orderly on this occasion being the Harkbir Thapa of the 5th Goorkha Rifles before mentioned in these chapters.

join my party. I must say I enjoyed it very much, and was much struck by the friendliness of the people. Of course the Rajah whom we had installed in the place of the fugitive king was friendly, but evidently our great ally was the Wazir Humayun, lately an exile, and who when the new régime was established became Prime Minister, as he still remains. He is a most charming individual, a great sportsman and rider, who thoroughly understands his own people and the neighbouring tribes. Later in the following year, when I was stationed in Hunza, we became great friends, and to this day exchange letters and small presents occasionally.

It is extraordinary how low the glaciers come down. Crossing the Hassanabad nullah, just as one arrives at Hunza proper, the glacier is black and dirty, but the ice showing through the moraine is within easy reach of the road, and I believe of later years has pushed still lower down. If this is the case, it must have passed below the 7000 feet level.

I always regret that I never, during my subsequent stay in Hunza, had any opportunity of following up the Kanjut Valley, or the branch Shimshal Valley; nor had I an opportunity of seeing the Kanjutis swim ponies across the river when in flood. In winter ponies can scramble

down from the Kilik Pass, but in summer when the river is in flood they have to be conducted backwards and forwards where bad places occur on the road by Kanjutis. These people are expert swimmers, and seem to be the only people who can stand the cold of these mountain torrents; for not only is the Hunza river larger than the Rhône at Visp when flooded in summer by the melting snows, but it is infinitely more rapid and absolutely icy. During my stay in Hunza a Kurghiz who prided himself on his swimming, and who was certainly sufficiently inured to cold, tried to follow the lead of the Kanjutis, but was drowned in the first attempt. Yet the natives of the valley will cross many times in a day without ill effects. Gromscheffsky the Russian traveller's account of his descent of this road is amusing; his ponies were swum across where the bad places occur in the usual way. He says, "Old hunter of the mountain goat as I am, I was unable to cross these roads without assistance." I was told in Hunza that it required two men each for both him and the few Cossacks who came with him to get them along. I rather doubt his having done very much hunting of the mountain goat. The road, however, as a road, is very bad, that is only fair to say.

After a couple of very pleasant days, and feeling

much fitter, I crossed over to Nagyr; the rope bridges were reported to be pretty fair, which about represented their condition. The average person, male or female, crosses a rope bridge without difficulty; personally I hate them, and especially the water under them. I have crossed a great many, I have also carried loads over them, but I hate them hard all the time. M'Cormick, the artist of the party, was always quite at home; he much preferred them to the hill-side, I think. Conway was possibly worse than I, but he couldn't have been in a greater funk. As a matter of fact, they are, when in good condition, absolutely safe; it is simply a matter of running water. The ropes of platted birch twigs are not at all slippery, and give a good hold, sometimes too good on one's clothes, and the side ropes are easily grasped; the whole question is the effect the running water underneath has on one. The only real difficulty lies in getting over the occasional cross-bar placed to keep the side ropes apart. I crossed to Samaiyar direct, and then joined M'Cormick and Roudebush, two of our companions, the latter of whom was also convalescing. The following day we left for Nagyr, and were there joined by the main party who had been exploring up the Samaiyar Valley, with a view of finding out if there was a possible pass into the Bagrote Valley;

bad weather, however, obliged them to abandon the attempt.

At Nagyr we had interviews with the old Rajah, a cripple at that time, and a ruffian I believe always. We also had polo and hockey and sports. One of our Goorkhas got laid out temporarily in a characteristic manner. They found a pair of ibex horns, and two of them strapped these on to their heads somehow, and the other two let them go at each other, as if they were fighting rams, the result being that one got knocked out for a little time, and had enough to keep him quiet for a couple of days. We collected everything we could—information, embroideries, skulls, etc. What was of present use came with us, what was not went back to Gilgit to be forwarded to Kashmir.

Our party was now collected, and consisted of Conway, M'Cormick the artist, Roudebush (a connection of Conway's), Eckenstein (the Jack of all trades), Zurbriggen (our invaluable guide), myself, and four Goorkhas, with a small proportion of servants,—quite a caravan, and one that it took a good deal of arranging for, to move over the tremendous country in front of us. Besides our necessary stores, our home comforts were running low, so that it was arranged that Eckenstein and myself with two

Goorkhas and selected porters should go as rapidly as possible over the Nushik La to Askardo, the capital of Baltistan, where our luggage was to meet us, and arrange for its transportation to Askolé, our future base. We were also to take with us a Wazir of Baltistan, who was supposed to know everything, though in fact he knew nothing.

This was quite a sporting effort, for the way was all new as far as the top of the Nushik and the far side too,—had, I think, only been explored by one or two Europeans, including Major Cumberland.

Our first march to Ratalu Hobar was charming, and our camp there equally so. We were to make a long march the following day direct to Hispar; and further had to collect our porters. The next morning we started betimes direct for Hispar with light loads, in fact too light as it proved, as we had not allowed enough margin for bad weather, and, as will be seen, had to go on very short commons indeed before all was over.

This is the great difficulty in mountain travel in any out-of-the-way parts. Porters are difficult to obtain and feed, but when one contemplates cutting oneself off from one's base, this difficulty is still more increased. On this occasion we certainly ought to have had at least three days' spare provisions, but as we knew that the road we were

to travel was in all probability difficult, and as pace was a great consideration, the smaller party we took the better. It was a little gamble with the elements, and they very nearly won.

From Hopar our porters were to go only as far as Hispar, two marches, where we were to engage new men to go to Askardo with us. We were told they knew the route, if any one did. It is a very interesting but rough march to Hispar amid the very finest, roughest, and in parts ugliest scenery imaginable. We had to descend on to the Shallihuru glacier and cross its junction with the Samaiyar Bar glacier, rough ice, and plenty of moraine-hopping; this latter a special art in itself, and the only department of mountaineering which can best be learnt in the Himalaya, and especially the Hindu Koosh and Karakoram. In the Alps two hours on moraine would disgust any one, but in these regions, where the glaciers are on quite another scale, three or four days' moraine-hopping continuously is by no means out of the common, and in consequence the skill that comes is also a local product. When beginning in the early morning as a destroyer of respectable language it beats golf hollow, by mid-day tears, by evening a hopeless dumbness. It is the only specific cure for the jabberer; it is the only exercise that practically teaches one the senselessness of talk, and the

necessity to stick strictly to business in silence. I hope modern politicians will take my advice, and take a three weeks' course yearly on the Hispar glaciers. A Karakoram moraine is a real educator.

After crossing the junction of these glaciers, we arrived at Barafu; thence over a ridge of some 1200 feet rise and descent to the village of Huru, where we lunched: it was quite hot, although the ridge we crossed was about 11,000 feet above sea-level. We descended to the Nagyr river from here and scrambled for several hours along its banks, the road being about as bad as a road could be; further, we experienced for the first time a sight of the typical mud avalanche, which is a speciality of the Karakoram and Hindu Koosh, and is a most unpleasant form of mountain-scorer. They are caused by the melting of the snow high up on the mountain side and by the infiltration of the soil; they may be started either by a very hot sun early in summer or by a severe storm. Avalanches often arrive quite unexpectedly, and might, if great care is not taken, be a real danger in crossing the continual stream-beds or dry water-courses that one meets. There is nothing in the way of forest or scrub pine or grass to hold the mountain side together, and as the angle is always of the steepest it can easily be understood how dangerous a slope may become when sodden with water. However,

finally we emerged from the river-banks and climbed up on to the Hispar village plateau. Here, as in any place where water is obtainable, and where the ground is flat enough, there was quite a green oasis. The people were also very friendly. I believe now that our best way would have been to have continued up the glacier we crossed in the morning, and to have crossed a small pass at its head which would probably have led us direct down to Hispar itself and saved us a deal of heat and fatigue.

Hispar village is really the back of beyond. At the foot of the Hispar glacier and cut off from everywhere by the most difficult of mountain country; fancy a winter there! However, perhaps that may not after all be so bad, for the river has dried to nothing, and travel, so long as there is not deep snow, is easier, and the gaieties of Nagyr, the capital, nearer in consequence. Here again the survival of the fittest is indeed exemplified. None but the hardiest live; all the weakly babies must die, for food is of the roughest, but if the surviving babies could only be better nourished, what a hardy race would be the result! Grain of the coarsest kind we were able to buy, but I do not recommend much use of it, except to those well accustomed; even then it should be thoroughly winnowed, and a fine sieve

is a necessity of travel; one loses very nearly half the bulk of the grain so winnowed, but one is able to feed without imminent danger of an early and painful death.

We spent an entire day in Hispar arranging for our porters, making terms, etc. We further made the village dance and generally had a "beano." Among our porters was an old fellow called Shersé, who said he had been over the Nushik when he was a young man and who would come with us to show us the way, but would not take a load. He turned out a capital old man, just as good as the rest for all his apparent years. I fancy, though, that age comes on pretty quickly in such surroundings after forty, and he probably wasn't as old as he looked.

From Hispar to our next camp, Mageroum, was a very rough walk, and long too, for we took eleven hours to reach it, but then found huts for our men and wood and water in sufficient quantities. We found a good path leading from Hispar to the glacier and evidently much used; this is accounted for by the fact that there is a good deal of grass on the mountain slopes, and goats and sheep are driven up to pasture on both sides of the glacier. Moraine-hopping and hillside-scrambling all day long, with an occasional branch glacier to cross, tired us considerably. This was

our first very long moraine-hop, and our education had really begun.

The following day we arrived at the foot of the Nushik La, at the huts of Hygūtūm, about 14,200 feet above sea-level. The Nushik crosses the ridge which separates the Hispar glacier from Baltistan. The little cluster of refuge huts situated at Hygūtūm had apparently not been used for some time, but had evidently been built by people who used them when crossing the pass many years before. As Shersé was the only man in Hispar who professed to have crossed, it is evident that the pass was then (1892) disused, and had been so for some time owing to its having become much more difficult than it formerly had been. This is quite common with glacier passes, as distinct from the average Himalayan passes, which are snow passes only. Looking at the Nushik on the day of our arrival it certainly looked formidable, what we could see of it, for the weather was breaking. The huts were few and in bad repair, but we found shelter enough for our small party. Eckenstein and myself occupied a stone box with holes in it, of the tightest description.

We spent an uncomfortable night, and awoke to real rough weather; the pass was quite out of the question; the next day was just as bad, and the following night. Provisions were also getting

short, we had cut ourselves down in rations as low as possible; we both awoke in the night cold and very hungry, and we then and there arranged that I should go back to Hispar and fetch more. We celebrated this decision by sacrificing a pound of chocolate, and slept warm at last. As I could not get to Hispar in one day, I had to be fed somehow, so one tin of erbswurst was allowed for myself and the Goorkhas, Eckenstein keeping the remainder. In the early morning we fled for four hours to Sirishing, a small collection of huts on the way down; here we stopped to eat a little biscuit; while so engaged there was a break in the weather, and before we had finished our biscuit the clouds were rolling away in every direction. There were miles of moraine between us and Hispar, and we hoped for food on the other side of the pass. Nushik La was not really much farther than Hispar itself was. We were ravenous. I said, "The erbswurst! cook it at once; let us stuff ourselves and go; we'll rush the pass tomorrow." We got back pretty hungry, but had to put up with very short commons. Still there was a warm drink for that evening, and another warm one for the morning.

We got off as early as it is possible to move a collection of men, the next morning, in fine weather. We descended from our huts to the

glacier, and traversing it soon began the ascent of steep snow-slopes; it was quite cold and safe enough, although above us were small hanging glaciers in any quantity. After crossing some fairly large schrunds, our guide Shersé pointed to the evident col still far above us to the right and said the way lay across some very steep and exposed slopes, directly to it. I was opposed to traversing these faces, for they did not look very stable, and the angle was alarmingly steep; we had also only one rope. However, Eckenstein said, "Let us see what they will do." So old Shersé, roping himself with one of their own goat's hair ropes to another man, went off, having first borrowed one of our ice-axes. He had evidently been at this game before, as he cut his steps right well and advanced without hesitation; having crossed the steepest face, which required hand-holes to be cut during the traverse also, we four, Eckenstein, the two Goorkhas and myself, followed, roped, and then turned to watch the unroped coolies; they crossed with perfect confidence. One or two loads, however, were left, and old Shersé and his companion trotted back and brought them over.

We continued to ascend diagonally across the upper slope, which was easy enough, but for the whole time under an unpleasantly unstable-

looking cornice ; in fact, a small section did break off and passed between myself and the next man. We crept along under the said cornice until we found a thin part, and Parbir, who was leading now, cut through and anchored himself, the rope being stretched and held to pass the porters over this rather nasty corner. Undoubtedly we came the wrong way. Zurbriggen, who followed us a few days later, led directly up, leaving our traverse on his right, and arrived without difficulty on the ridge some 500 feet higher than our col. A much safer way ; still we saw a most interesting performance, and the danger was much less than it appeared, for it was very cold and the snow in excellent condition until the last hour or so. We also had the pick of the Hispar men. Later on, when the main body arrived, every available man was taken by Conway to take his things over the Hispar Pass itself, and Zurbriggen, who conveyed Roudebush over the Nushik, had to put up with the worst of those even. I believe they had trouble with these men, but as most difficulties arise from want of being able to communicate easily, it is probable that a good deal of the trouble was unnecessary.

Our men were excellent in every way, and considering their wretched foot-gear, they were wonderfully good on snow. Their foot-gear con-

sists of pieces of half-dressed hide wrapped round and round the foot and leg almost up to the knee and secured with a long leathern thong. When dry it is excellent on rock, but on snow or ice of any steepness it is a real danger. They are known in Gilgit as "Taootis," and in Hunza Yasin and Chitral as "Taooching." We stayed half an hour or so on the top, admiring the view, which was wonderful beyond description. I do not know the name of the giant of some 25,500 feet directly to our north on the northern branch of the Hispar, but he was magnificent; still, such was the mass of mountains directly to the north, north-east, and west, that it was the whole *coup d'œil* that appealed and not any one particular peak.

I see Mrs. Bullock-Workman considers that the pass must have got much more difficult during the last ten years, and does not believe that local porters could have been got over the pass as she saw it. This I doubt very much; I cannot see how any face of a mountain at the angle at which the northern face of the Nushik lies, could ever alter very much in so short a time, except in the small matter of hanging glacier, cornices and so on; and in the matter of porters, I think it very much depends on getting the right men from the villages, and the willingness of those men to assist to the best of their ability. The Balti Wazir of Khapalu

and his two Balti attendants, notwithstanding that he was supposed to know everything, was the only man at all overcome, but he, like all Baltis, was a mild and biddable creature and did what he was told. His equipment included an umbrella and a sword, the sword to show his rank, though I'm perfectly certain he would never have used it even in self-defence, and the umbrella for both sun and rain, and indeed, on the descent, I envied him this, for we had a real hot time, and as the way was very easy an umbrella was of real service. From the top our way was over easy slopes, névé and snow, and, when lower down, moraine-hopping as usual on to the Kero Lungma (glacier) to Stiatboo Bransa. (Bransa apparently means alp or refuge, camping-place.)

We had had a gorgeous lunch of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch of something or other on the summit; still we were ready for our allowance of about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of what was left, mixed up in water for dinner. (*Par parenthèse* I may here remark that nothing makes me so wild as not having enough to eat.) Well, we had a chilly night, and had just enough left to have something warm in the morning, but before we arrived at our journey's end we understood the hollowness of life, and that all is vanity, always supposing that the real meaning of the word vanity is emptiness. What made it worse was that

after four to five hours of very rough walking we came to an alp, Damoc by name, where there were plenty of people, supplies, etc., or ought to have been; but every one was out, and we got a mere pittance. Semi-civilised man has a great pull when it comes to short commons; except that they looked rather thin, I don't think the porters felt it very much, they certainly slipped along with their loads at a great pace.

Five hours' run from Damoc took us to the Chogo Lungma (glacier), by which time we were getting desperate, and by no means relished the 1½ hour of very severe moraine-hopping that finally landed us on the Arindoo side. Anyhow, there was Arindoo below and real supplies of all sorts; further, every man had an appetite that it was a pleasure and a pride to own. The people of Arindoo were very kind, and even the arrival of the Nagyr men, of whom most Baltis have a traditional fear, did not prevent their giving us their best services. I attach the menu¹ for that evening, the next day, and following morning, from Mr. Eckenstein's list. I believe it is in every way remarkable. I have seen performances something like it since, but it has happily had no real rival.

¹ 8 quarts milk.

53 eggs.

3 sheep.

32 lbs. flour.

40 lbs. barley flour.

10 lbs. butter.

3 chickens.

Our walk to Askardo was pleasant, easy, epicurean, on foot, on pony, and even by skin raft, a most pleasant and exciting form of locomotion. Baltistan skin rafts are made by inflating a number of goat-skins and tying them under a light frame. The oars are merely poles, but they appear to be easy to direct, and very considerable rapids can be safely negotiated. The only danger is, that the goat-skins are weak, and also their mouths not very securely fastened. As rafts they are inferior in my opinion to the bullock-skin rafts in use farther down the Indus. We were on the Basha river, and really after the desolate country we had been in Baltistan appeared quite charming, the large villages on approaching Shigar being really most attractive; some with very superior polo grounds. We were also happy on our way down in being able to wallow for half a day in the hot springs of Chutrun, a real pleasure, for a comfortable bath is not easily obtained in the mountain and is usually postponed for some other more fitting occasion.

We were in clover on arrival at Askardo, where we found all our baggage safely arrived from Kashmir, two months' post collected, and last, but not least, an old Harrow friend of my own, Captain Churcher, who was shooting, and Captain Townshend with a Kashmir Imperial Service Regiment. We spent a most excellent time. Our host, Captain Towns-

hend, and my friend were both capital performers on the banjo, and we were very happy, assisted by the cup that cheers and unfortunately inebriates.

However, we were soon off, and what a caravan we had—at least fifty loads of stores and food, to say nothing of Captain Churcher's porters. We were all bound for Askolé, and were going to travel by the nearest route, though not the easiest. The easiest route is a dull and hot trudge up river-beds, first the Basha and then the Braldoh, until Askolé is reached. The nearest route is over the Skoro La, almost direct from Shigar, and can be easily accomplished in four days: it is a steep and high pass of the kind known as a grind, but in good weather offers no difficulty. It is, however, quite worth crossing on account of its surroundings. The Goorkha orderlies were in particularly lively mood and led me at a tremendous pace to the top, where we had lunch, I foolishly devouring a hard-boiled egg and promptly getting mountain sickness. Nothing could have been more typical of the real nature of mountain sickness. Of course at great heights one must suffer from breathlessness and fatigue, but nausea and headache are, I believe, unnecessary; that is to say, that a healthy man in first-rate condition who is very careful what he eats, who gives his digestion as little as possible to do when at great heights, need not suffer from sick-

ness and headache at greater altitudes than any point that has yet been attained.

If on the Skoro La I had gone at a sensible pace and had, let us say, taken the egg raw, always supposing that it had not qualified for electioneering purposes, I should have suffered no inconvenience of any kind from the height; or again if I had eaten nothing on the pass but had still gone the same pace, I should in all probability have escaped. At great altitudes one's powers of digestion are, under any condition, low, and altitude and fatigue combined cannot be ignored by any one without bad results. To get high and to be strong when there and fit for work, require in the first instance all-round soundness of wind and limb and a supra-normal digestion. I really was very bad, and though descending had to make many halts, not to admire the scenery, I cared nothing for it by this time, but to offer sacrifice to the mountain devils. Mountain devils as described by most nations are funny beings; all I can say is that I hope they liked my sacrifices more than I liked making them.

We reached Askolé by one o'clock next day, crossing the Biafo stream by a very serviceable rope bridge, which, though high above the river, was so new and good that, for once, I was quite happy. We were in plenty of time; no news of Conway's

party. Askol  is the back of beyond ; it is the last habitation. Beyond it in the direction of the great mountains there is nothing ; it lies at the foot of the greatest mountain wastes in the world in all probability, for where else can such a country be found ? Its glaciers can only be matched in Arctic or Antarctic circles, its mountain masses nowhere in the world. This is the true Mustagh (ice mountains) ; a far more suitable name than the better known one, the Karakoram (black gravel). The Hispar-Biafo, the Punmar, the Nobnndi Solundi, and Baltoro, to say nothing of Dr. Longstaff's new glacier at the head of the Saltoro—what other mountain chain can show such ice rivers ?

In the Karakoram mountains is K², the second highest in the world, only surpassed by Mount Everest of measured heights, though where the Everest group can show an assistant or two, K² has a regiment of mountains as supporters. Even after such travel as we had already had among the giants, here one must readjust one's scale again ; for this is a country where 24,000 peaks are in profusion, they are, so to speak, *bourgeois*, the commoners of the district ; a country in truth to travel in, to explore, to climb if one likes, and one's ambition and pleasure lie in that direction, but too terrific for pleasure. Askol  could never be a mountaineering centre, as Hunza might be under different

circumstances. Askolé represents primitive man at the edge of a primitive half-formed world.

We were finally joined by the Hispar party, who had made a memorable first crossing of the Hispar-Biafo glacier, one hundred miles of ice. I have ever since regretted that it was not my luck to see the great Place de la Concorde, at the head of the Hispar and Biafo glaciers: a great ice lake at roughly 17,000 feet elevation, surrounded by stupendous mountains, Chamonix aiguilles of 23,000, rock, ice and snow, a wilderness of mountains. It was a trying march no doubt, though without any kind of technical difficulty, but very tiring.

We now had to prepare for the last stage of our expedition, the further exploration of the Baltoro glacier and its surroundings; and it required a considerable amount of arranging too, for, though Eckenstein returned to Kashmir from Askolé, and though Roudebush had preceded him, we were still four Europeans with four Goorkhas, servants, etc., and we proposed to cut ourselves off from Askolé for at least six weeks. Nothing of any sort is obtainable beyond here, therefore food for porters must also be taken. Luckily we were well backed by the authorities, and also the head man of Askolé, an old fellow, Birché by name, who was quite ready to help; but I think, by the time all our things

were off, that the male population of Askolé was exhausted.

The Baltis, who now acted as our porters, are a gentle and mild race. They are very good carriers, and have really all the characteristics of human beasts of burden. They are patient and enduring, but are not "thrusters"; further, they have great trust in any one who treats them well. They are, however, of so timid a nature that they are the only race whom the Kashmiri proper is able to bully. By the Kashmiri proper I mean the Moham-medan inhabitant of Kashmir, and not his Hindu ruler, who is of Rajput descent, and would not at all like to be called a Kashmiri. The average Kashmiri is a great big hulking coward, but a blusterer on occasions; at any rate he has been able to bluster sufficiently to dominate the Balti. In every way I prefer the Balti. Besides our porters, we had quite a nice little flock of sheep and goats, mutton on hoof in fact, and milk for our tea, this latter a real luxury. Taking a flock of sheep over a rope bridge is always exciting, and we had a rather nasty one to cross on our way.

On the first march out from Askolé one passes and has to cross the Biafo glacier, down which the main expedition had come. Before our arrival there, the road not very far from Askolé itself crosses the face of a very steep

cliff. At its very steepest and narrowest point we found quite a little fortification, a mixture of bridge-head and block-house; this clearly shows that the tradition that the Nagyris were in the habit of raiding into Baltistan is true, though the last time that we could hear of Nagyris having come this way was for peaceful purposes, and further, they were caught in bad weather on the Zorn La, the pass at the watershed, and only one man managed to arrive in Hispar village, the remainder perishing on the glacier. Bad weather to a well-equipped party at the head of the Biafo or Hispar would be a real danger, so no wonder the entirely unprovided native viewed a journey into Baltistan by this pass with dismay. No water-proofs, no sleeping-bags, no matches, and what is even more serious, no tents, though these natives have the custom of building themselves little stone tents; the said tents let the wind through beautifully, and also soon silt up with driven snow.

The route to the foot of the Baltoro glacier itself was typical Baltistan, that is, despite the height, hot and dusty, scrambly and tiring. One had to start early, partly to avoid the heat as much as possible, and partly because in the early morning the small side streams are easy to cross. After ten o'clock they begin to rise, and often by the evening a stream will be uncrossable that presented no diffi-

culties in the early morning. As it was, on our second march after crossing the Punmar stream, we had some trouble in getting our things and sheep over a stream. The early part of the march had taken considerable time owing to the necessity of an abrupt ascent and descent of 2500 feet, as well as a rope bridge to cross, to avoid a cliff. Most of the unladen members of the party preferred traversing across the cliff by quite a sporting little route, but not a way for a train of laden men. So we were later than was convenient on the banks of the said stream, which was rising rapidly. No time was to be wasted, and after two or three attempts the Goorkhas and myself managed to get a rope over and secure it. The passage of the baggage and sheep was an effort ; a load is fairly easy to manage, as both hands are free for work, but a restive sheep or goat is much more troublesome, though usually not so heavy.

We were in clover when we arrived at the actual fort of the Baltoro ; on the banks of the stream near its foot was a willow thicket, shade and grass, and good water, complete *aram* (peace). The snout of the Baltoro is impressive and huge, an hour's walk to get on to the top. It looked hopeful. The moraine-covered surface was not in view, and we hoped that we might at last find a fairly clean glacier. The moraine was distinctly less dis-

gusting to look at than that of the Biafo ; it was also more deceptive. The first sight of the Biafo tells one what to expect. On the Baltoro from below perhaps a little hope existed, but once on the glacier, O ye gods and little fishes ! a sea of stones. Moraine-hopping *in excelsis*, and three days of it we had without stopping. Then we felt that we must get out, so a general halt was called, and whilst the coolies rested and cooked, we set out for our first climb in these regions : an insignificant point on the ridge north of the glacier which we hoped would give us a view of the K^2 massif.

We had a first-rate day. A very interesting and rather difficult climb and a gorgeous panorama from our point (19,700 feet). But what is a peak of this height in this country,—a mere incident, an excrescence, a wart ; though, speaking as mere human beings, we were satisfied. To begin with, the climb had all the essentials of a good Alpine day. It was a new peak, an exciting Alpine statement, only to be matched by the equally exciting Himalayan statement, of being able to say that one has climbed a peak which has previously been climbed. This gives a real thrill. I can only think of two which have been climbed more than once—Haramuk in Kashmir, and Kabru in Sikhim. Next the weather was perfect, and further, we were all very well all day. Then

the climbing was excellent, and the rock good. We climbed in two parties—my party being Parbir and Amar Sing. We did not rope until it was quite necessary, and then, as the climbing was a little awkward, Parbir proceeded to rope Amar Sing round the neck with a slip-knot and pull it tight, and then nearly fell off the mountain from laughing. This danger passed, we proceeded.

The top afforded the most gorgeous of panoramas; but although we could see the top of K², such was the mass of mountains intervening that as far as its geography was concerned, we might just as well not have come. Not so to the south and east. To the south the Masherbrum *massif*, very fine in every detail, though typical of its surroundings, ice, snow, and rock precipices, in every way a magnificent group, but really only an incident in the system to which it belongs. As an isolated mountain in the same way that the Nun Kun peaks are isolated, it would instantly take its proper place and achieve a reputation; but not more so than would the many other typical groups to be found in this prodigious country.

To begin with the Mustagh Tower, a truly magnificent pinnacle on the north of the Baltoro, built on the lines of the Matterhorn, but infinitely more grand. Given the isolation of, say, Nanga Parbat, its reputation would be world-wide;

here it really does little more than add interest to a frightful and enormous desolation. To the east, by the Gusherbrum peaks, to which all my last remarks equally apply, stood an unknown snow peak, a pure snow peak, a Jungfrau, of infinite beauty of outline and quite alone in its character, for the general character of these mountains is so rocky and precipitous as to be almost appalling to the imaginative mind; this group seemed friendly among savage surroundings. "The Golden Throne," said Conway; a happy inspiration; we all with one accord said "that must be our direction." We then turned to our work with some hope of accomplishing a high ascent, and not only that, but with a new ambition to explore so beautiful a group, and further quite an unknown tract. We had a very sporting descent, by an easier though steep route; some climbing, some glissading, no dulness, and finally a rush down steep slopes. If there is anything more exhilarating than a rapid standing glissade, I have got to find it; probably an art with which I am unacquainted, ski-ing, would supply the deficiency, though of very much the same character, still I think that a "hurroosh" down steep slopes when the ground is suitable is very near it. Unfortunately, if the "hurroosh" goes on for too long, one is apt to suffer on the following day.

We divided the next day; Conway and M'Cormick remaining behind to survey and sketch and explore all they could, and myself with Zurbriggen and Goorkhas making direct for the foot of the glaciers below the Golden Throne. One route led us past the junction of the main Baltoro and the glaciers running down from K², of which we had a really fine view; past also the Gusherbrum peaks, which impressed us, I think, even more than K² itself; past the Mustagh Pass also, over which Younghusband had crossed. A marvel above and vileness below, for we were still moraine-hopping, and, though expert, still unhappy. In those days no one had really visited the Baltoro. Colonel Godwin Austin had spent at most a week on it, and the upper reaches, so to speak, of the glacier had never before been visited. Younghusband had descended possibly half-way when crossing the Mustagh; no intimate examination had before been made.

The special task that was given to us was to find our way up through the evident large ice fall descending from the glacier system of the Golden Throne on to the Baltoro's main glacier, and further to transport a camp on to the higher névé. We established a base camp on the flat glacier named by Conway Footstool Camp, and the following morning, with a couple of Goorkhas,

but without loads, went for quite a sporting little glacier climb. We found a fairly decent way through large séracs, and Zurbriggen took the opportunity of cutting immense steps. In the next four days we carried our camp up, and pushed the exploring farther, sometimes carrying loads ourselves and sometimes urging timid Baltis. The right manner of urging a Balti is, first of all, to make him smile; next, to have a good leader; and last, but not least, a man with a sharp ice-axe to follow up.

When a Balti continues to fall in a determined manner out of easy steps, the right method is not to enlarge the step, but, with suitable remarks, calculated to amuse the other Baltis, bear on the slipper with the point of the ice-axe. It is the mixture of ice-axe and suitable remarks in a language they can understand that produces good results; fluent Italian, French, or German, or even that form of the English language known as Amurrican, has not at all the same effect, and is generally a great depressor of heart and induces to "cold feet." For the Balti is a very timid creature, and must have the cheering as well as the point of the ice-axe. Further, he is a nice creature, and the ice-axe should not be applied except very gently.

Having established our camp, we took a day off, or rather we marched down half a march to

meet Conway ; and as the glacier was flat and the going easy, both Zurbriggen and myself promptly got a slight attack of mountain sickness. What again could be more typical ? We had had a week of very hard work, we were at a suitable elevation, 16,500 feet approximately, and we were tired and consequently were not digesting our food properly ; the immediate result was what is known as mountain sickness. A hot meal soon set me right ; Zurbriggen had previously recovered, not being nearly as bad as I was. We had a real good rest, and returned all together. Next day, as the weather was splendid, we determined to go up to our upper camp and take any peak that would give us two things, a first-rate panorama and a chance of getting high ; but though, as Conway said, a survey was his first object, incidentally we would have been charmed if we had been able to get to the top of the Golden Throne itself.

We started on the following morning with our final loads of stores, now carried by Baltis alone, for we determined to spend some days high up, and we had had quite sufficient fatigue as it was. Two days were spent in pushing the camp up, and a very interesting time we had, though the heat was great and there was some difficulty in pioneering the coolies, ill-booted and heavily laden for work at this height, through the somewhat

delicate séracs. The coolies were all sent down at night under charge of Goorkhas, as, though the day temperature was high, the night was very low, and there was neither shelter nor sufficient firing for them to get cooking done above, and indeed down below on the glacier, wood was only with difficulty brought up by our relays of coolies left on the way.

As we mounted we noticed that a snow ridge on our left apparently formed part of the main peak at the head of the glacier, and as it was directly above our final camp, or rather our two final camps, we determined to make an attempt by this route. We had divided our camp on account of the difficulty of getting all our Whymper tents to the upper camp, so Conway, M'Cormick, and Zurbriggen went to the upper camp, the Goorkhas and myself remained at the lower, and it was arranged that we should start in the early morning and climb the 1000 feet or so of snow slopes that separated us, and take them on. Then was shown the effect of cold at high altitudes. We were up early, well before sunrise, and though the night was still and there was not more than 20° of frost, by the time we arrived at the upper tent we had had enough, my hands and feet were both numbed, and I almost tumbled through the door of Conway's Whymper tent. We all had to take

refuge in the one tent, and very glad we were of the extra warmth. Zurbriggen soon cooked some cocoa and we revived, but no attempt was made to start until it was full daylight and the sun near.

We finally set out, as in our last climb, on two ropes—Conway, Zurbriggen, and Harkbir; myself, Parbir, and Amar Sing. Zurbriggen led and had a hard task, though at a low level the work which he accomplished during the day would not have been out of the way; here, starting at an altitude of 20,000 feet, it was severe. A snow climb of some steepness brought us on to our ridge, and then a succession of further ridges, narrow enough and sufficiently overhung in parts to require a great deal of step-cutting in ice; this continual cutting, mixed with short pieces of steep rocks, made up the whole climb. On the second ridge, at a height of approximately 21,000 feet, Amar Sing collapsed with mountain sickness. I put this attack down entirely to the hard work he had had during the previous week and not to the actual exertion of the day. I then continued with Parbir; the pace after this point was very slow, and we suffered considerably from the heat and glare and from the deadly coldness of our feet, showing how at great altitudes one's resistance is reduced. We all, I think, had to take our boots off and restore the circulation in our feet.

On arriving at the summit of our third ridge we found we were stopped by a sudden descent of some 3000 feet. We were, in fact, on a distinct peak on a ridge leading to the Golden Throne. It would have been impossible to go on; and though we were disappointed that our ridge came to an end, we were infinitely relieved to be able to stop. No one was any the worse; we suffered from breathlessness, of course, when ascending, but there was very little other sign of the high altitude. Zurbriggen smoked a cigar, we all had a nip of brandy, Conway took observations and photographed. We felt we had accomplished all we were going to, and were content. Our panorama from the top was too prodigious for my words. I must quote Conway's own description:

"The southward vistas, which were wholly new to us, of course chiefly arrested our attention on the moment of arrival on the summit, but it was westwards, down the valley we had mounted, and far, far away to the north-west, that the vastest area was displayed to our wondering gaze.

"Gusherbrum, the Broad Peak, and K² showed their clouded heads over the north ridge of the Golden Throne, and were by no means striking objects.

"Farther round we looked straight down the Throne glacier to its junction with the Baltoro,

right above which rose in all its constant majesty the finest mountain of this district, second only to the unsurpassable Matterhorn for majesty of form, the Mustagh Tower. It is a peak of great height. Beyond this and the neighbouring Mustagh peaks came the Biafo mountains and those that surround the Punmah glacier. This was but the foreground; away the eye wandered to the infinite distance, behind the mountains of Hunza, possibly as far as the remote Pamir. This incomparable view was before us during all our descent, with the evening lights waxing in brilliancy upon it, and the veil of air becoming warmer over it. The high clouds that overhung it became golden as the sun went down, and every grade of pearly mystery changing from moment to moment, enwrapped the marshalled mountain ranges that form the piled centre of Asia and send their waters to the remotest seas."

Our descent was pleasant in every way for all except Harkbir, who had a thrilling moment. He was the only one who had no crampons, his boots, and more especially his boot-nails, were very nearly finished, the steps were partially obliterated by the heat of the sun, and during a traverse of one of the steepest places he slipped out of them. Of course it must be understood that steps cut for a party employing crampons are more than usually

small, and it was only owing to his more than usual good balance that he had been allowed to take the risk of walking at such an angle in crampon steps. He was the leading man on his own rope at the time and was well held, but he himself was quite equal to the occasion, stuck well to his axe, and soon cut himself little steps back to the line. Amar Sing was found quite recovered where we left him, and picking him up we all followed and even glissaded down the final slopes to our camp, and myself to the lower camp.

No words can describe the return to our base next morning; there were no coolies, we were all tired, we started very late, the sun was desperately hot and our loads heavy, snow and séracs and everything that could possibly get bad got so at once. We took hours, but finally arrived to find a hot meal awaiting us, for we had been seen, and our Panjabi cook was equal to the occasion. The prospect of returning was nearly as exciting as the start. The poor Baltis were clearly jubilant. We were off, and hoped not to be stopped. The only delay was an attempt, which came to nothing, to cross *via* the Masherbrum ridge into the Khapalu Valley. While this was being discussed and prospected, I was despatched on an errand with a couple of Goorkhas to Askolé; without doubt I was pleased to get

off, but I had no luck at all, for crossing a small crevasse over some jammed stones I had a severe fall and damaged my back and ankle, and had to camp then and there on the moraine, where I was found by the returning party the next day. Not believing that I was badly hurt, I did not require from them many supplies, but sprains are difficult things to cure, and I counted without my host.

Our party went on, and I soon hoped to follow them. My companions were two Goorkhas and a Kashmiri, my own servant and shikari. After six very boring and desperately cold nights I made an attempt to move, but after getting a mile or so farther into the glacier, collapsed. Previous to this one of the Goorkhas had been despatched with a couple of Balti coolies to do a forced march to Askolé and return with food, I keeping a couple more with me, who collected enough scrub farther down the glacier to keep us going. His subsequent performance was really remarkable. Unfortunately, where I collapsed the moraine was thin, only a sprinkling of gravel over the ice, and I had in consequence a very bad time indeed. Unable to move in the day more than a few yards, I never could get my blood to circulate, and consequently the nights and especially the early mornings were very bad; my feet frequently got numbed and had to be revived. I was very sorry

for myself, my only amusements being to try and trace Younghusband's route down the branch glacier immediately to the north of my hotel and looking out for ibex, who occasionally crossed the glacier.

However, continual rubbing and massage after a few days allowed me to make an effort, or, to put it quite truthfully, want of food obliged us to get down. We made two marches of the very slowest, as I had to walk between two men, when to our intense joy we met Amar Sing and his returning men, all carrying grain in little skins. They made the journey up and down, nearly from the Mustagh Pass glacier and back, in eight days—simply prodigious going. They showed signs of it, too; they were thin, but we were thinner. They brought Balti flour, butter, and eggs—rendered by the sun almost into election eggs, a matter of no importance under the conditions.

Our final descent to Askolé was slow, and to me very tiring, but a good rest there of some days, with plenty of food, soon put me right. My foot and leg were not strong enough to face the Skoro La again, so we took the ordinary route *via* the Braldoh to its junction with the Basha, and so *via* Shigar to Askardo; then over the Satpoora Pass and Deosai plains back to Kashmir. This passage was not without incident,

as I annexed a couple of quite good red bears, and also found the remains of some Panjabi traders who had been overwhelmed by a severe storm and had apparently lost their way. One of the red bears gave quite a little excitement; he had given a running shot, and the bullet had hit him right at the end of his back-bone, paralysing his hind-quarters. In order not to spoil his skin I determined to finish him with the butt of my ice-axe, but he was particularly lively in front; finally, after some very rapid manœuvres, I got a swing at him, when he died at once, for a bear's skull is thin, and on skinning him we found the skull crushed right in. A very rapid but exciting incident, a matter of a few seconds.

Thence I made the best of my way back to India, and awaited Conway's return; what orders I received on arrival and my next movements must be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

CHILAS

ON arrival in Abbottabad, on my return from Conway's expedition, I found orders awaiting me to return to Gilgit as Special Service Officer, and, if possible, to bring Zurbriggen with me, as he was offered an engagement to train Hunza and other levies in snow work. Zurbriggen willingly accepted the offer, and it was only owing, on our arrival in Srinagar, to a telegram from Colonel Durand to say the state of the country was too disturbed to allow of the training to continue, that he did not proceed with me to Gilgit. Even if he had done so, I very much doubt whether he would have been able to teach levies much that would have been of use to them; none of the passes leading to the north into either the Pamirs or into Afghan territory require extra special snow knowledge, and further, there are so many men in that country who know quite enough about snow for any military purpose, and in every other way the local people are first-class



HINDU KOOSHI SHIKARI AND GOORKHA RIFELMAN.



HUNZA NATIVES.



INDUS ABOVE CHILAS.

mountaineers. Of course, a knowledge of the use of ski would have been of real use, but that knowledge Zurbriggen did not possess, and at that time ski-ing in the Alps was quite in its infancy. When one comes to realise that the post to Gilgit has to be brought during the whole year over two elevated passes, one wonders that an expert instructor has not been engaged; I believe that there are ski in use, but I am quite certain that there is not an expert either working the post or instructing the post-runners. Of course, there would be a fairly high initial outlay, but there would also be a great saving in time, and probably a considerable number of lives saved, for the road in winter is much exposed to snow avalanches of a kind common in the Alps. The road, of course, offers no difficulties; there is hardly a slope except in the first pass, the Rajdiangan, which an expert Norwegian or continental skier would call steep. But ski-ing is an art and must be learnt from people who are qualified to teach, and cannot be picked up because ski are to be got, any more than the possession of a sword makes a fencer.

Zurbriggen had to be, as Pooh-Bah in the *Mikado* says, suitably insulted, and sent off to Europe. I then continued my journey alone by the usual route, now a comparatively respectable person, though on my journey down from Skardo

this had hardly been the case, for I had a six months' beard, and owing to my -accident had next door to no luggage at all, and further, had not had my hair cut for ten weeks, to say nothing of a very ragged face. So, with a damaged paggri for head-dress, I looked a real ruffian. I know I was taken for a wandering Pathan by two officers on their way to Gilgit.

I had with me four Goorkhas of my regiment and one Pathan of the Guides, who unfortunately came to an untimely end. The season was already advanced—the third week in November; there was new snow on both the Rajdiangan and the Burzil Passes, but not enough to be any real hindrance, and we had very cold and clear weather—ideal marching weather, in fact. We marched as fast as we could get our luggage along, for were not rumours already abroad that there was trouble on the Indus? After leaving Astor these rumours became certainties; the troops had started. Finally, we arrived in Bunji, to find an engineer officer, Captain Capper, in command, and soon to get orders to hurry off after the troops down the Indus Valley. Shortly, this was the situation. For many years the Chilasis, or rather all the inhabitants of the Indus Valley below Bunji, had been in a more or less unruly state. A few miles below Bunji, British, or rather Kashmir, territory came to an

end; beyond this lay Yagistan, or the country without settled rule. The hillmen in this region are chiefly of Shin descent, speaking the Shinaki language; but as one descends the Indus, the race shows more and more signs of Pathan influence, until the large settlements of the Kohistanis—the great villages of Koli and Pāliās—are reached, where, I imagine, the race must be a mixture of about half and half.

Between Bunji and Chilas the villages are few and far between. In the neighbourhood of Chilas itself, and the valleys draining into the Indus from Nanga Parbat, there are a few settlements, in those days all more or less turbulent and wild. On the right bank of the river, below Bunji, is the settlement of Ghor, high on the hill-side, and thus semi-independent, though in touch with the Gilgit Agency. Beyond Ghor again lie the independent valleys of Tangir and Darel, both inhabited by Shins, and to this day, I believe, unvisited by any European, holding also a fair number of men. The Chilasis had for many years been in the habit of raiding either over the Babusar Pass or neighbouring passes into the Kaghan Valley, carrying off sheep, etc., and had lately been particularly annoying and restless. The first trouble began with the shooting of a Government news-writer in Chilas—he escaped with his life,—and Dr. Robertson, who was then

assisting the British Agent, Colonel Durand, found it necessary to move into the Chilas Valley with troops. The next incident that occurred was an attempt to murder Captain Twigg—returning to Bunji from Dr. Robertson's camp—by the Ghor people. They did manage to kill his servant, and, I believe, murdered his shikari, though he himself escaped. The treacherous Ghor people lay in wait for him as he was crossing a difficult bit of cliff near the village of Darang, on the right bank of the Indus, below Ghor settlement itself, and opened fire on him when in the worst part. It was a quite half-hearted affair, as they disappeared at once as soon as he was through the cliff. Assassins, in fact, but assassins who were undoubtedly sent by their superiors. In fact, the Ghor people, under the leadership of their treacherous Mullah, would have liked to have joined in with the Chilas, only they had not resolution enough to do so.

The men who attacked probably thought that he and his servants were all that there was left of Dr. Robertson's party; for, although they left Captain Twigg on their failure to stop him crossing the cliff, they returned, and, had it not been that Twigg had built himself a little sangar and was also armed, would of a certainty have killed him; as it was they exchanged shots at long range, and it was only the opportune arrival of some

Kashmir troops that enabled Captain Twigg to escape out of as awkward a position as a man could well be in.

The country is probably as difficult as any in the world—no road of any description. Transport was almost non-existent, and consisted almost wholly of Balti coolies collected as rapidly as possible around Bunji. Dr. Robertson, now Sir George Robertson of Chitral siege fame, taking all the troops that he could feed, in detachments, had to all intents and purposes disappeared into space, leaving orders to push through troops whenever porters could be got to carry their food for them; food and ammunition formed the only baggage at first. Luckily, the earlier marches are through an almost entirely uninhabited country of the greatest difficulty, and also his movement was the last thing that the Chilasis expected him to do. But his plan, provided he could be rationed, was not so dangerous as it appears, and was born of an intimate knowledge of the character of the people he was dealing with. A dash was made quite unexpectedly to opposite Chilas itself, to a settlement named Thalpen; there he immediately entrenched himself, working day and night at the walls. The enemy were ill-armed and of less cohesion than the average frontier tribes; they had, in fact, no leading spirits of importance, for

their tribes are almost ideal socialists, and have been so for generations. The whole question of his safety and of the future success of his move depended on the officers at Bunji being able to push reinforcements of troops and food through to him. It was undoubtedly a very anxious time for Colonel Durand, the British Agent, for Chitral affairs were in a very bad way, and he was obliged to keep as many men as he could ready for possible trouble on his western frontier. However, not only did he manage to spare quite a considerable body of Imperial Service troops, but he also sent down the Punyál local levies, and last, but not least, a detachment of his own bodyguard now furnished by the 15th Sikhs, the moral backbone of the force.

Captain Wallace moved with a force of Imperial Service troops by the right bank of the Indus, and made a very arduous march over the hills through Ghor settlement itself just to overawe those treacherous people and let them well understand that they were being watched. Other detachments were pushed down the river to Darang, below Ghor, where a post was established. Detachments, owing to the difficulty in obtaining porters, and also to the difficulty of the road, were small, but were pushed through as often as possible. Both the Punyál levies and Captain Wallace's

detachment arrived at Dr. Robertson's camp in time to reinforce him before he was seriously threatened. After their arrival attempts were made to force a passage across the Indus to Chilas, but the enemy were too many for them, and after severe fighting, during which four Goorkhas of the Imperial Service Kashmir Infantry made a very plucky attempt to cross the river on a skin raft, three being killed and the fourth only saving himself by diving under the raft and being carried back by the current towards the friendly bank, Dr. Robertson took refuge in his camp again. In this fighting Captain Wallace was seriously wounded in the knee; and nothing brings home to me the really terrific difficulty of the country as it was then than the fact that he did not get back to Bunji until six months afterwards, the like fate being that of the rest of the wounded, of whom there were a considerable number before all the operations were over.

At this juncture the Punyál levies arrived, having travelled from Gilgit over the Kinijut Pass—direct, that is, and not by way of the Indus Valley. They were of the greatest assistance. The inability of the force to cross the river at Thalpen had heartened the Chilasis considerably, and on the following morning they attacked the fortified post in considerable numbers. This was actually

playing the very game that suited the defenders. The poorly-armed tribesmen had no chance against the breech-loader of the defence, although those breech-loaders were for the most part nothing but the old-fashioned Snider. This attack was driven back with great ease and great loss to them, and followed by a most spirited counter-attack made by the whole garrison. The garrison, leaving all unnecessary encumbrance behind in order not to impede their speed of movement, chased the tribesmen out of sight, inflicting considerable loss and entirely demoralizing them. The uniformed Kashmir infantry even took off their trousers, so as to be able to run quicker. Robertson immediately crossed the Indus in skin rafts and took the village of Chitral. Sangar, or fortified posts, were established, preparatory to a more pretentious fort being built.

About the time that the fighting at Thalpen was taking place I had been ordered to set out with my four Goorkhas and a Pathan orderly to join the Kashmir troops at Darang and to take charge of that post. Over the Bunji plain our luggage was carried by mules, but on arrival at Ramghat, at the foot of the Hattu Pir, the road ceased, and the plain also. The path here enters the great gorges of the Indus Valley. Our new transport was now ready for us, and was not on a very liberal scale ;

still, by cutting everything down except necessities, it had to do. It consisted, in fact, of two local coolies, not Baltis, who were at the time the actual two last men left. Luckily for us, everything was quite quiet as far as Darang, and, in fact, it could hardly be otherwise, as the banks of the river are entirely uninhabitable. We slept at Ramghat, and the following morning, getting a little assistance with our loads for the first part of the way, set out for what was, for loaded men, decidedly a forced march. We were all very heavily laden, and the road, though in many places over flattish bits, very broken and bad, the climb through the last pāri,¹ in our loaded condition, being quite a little bit of mountaineering, for our loads were very much increased. A mile or so before arriving at this difficult bit we sighted quite a good oorial on the hill-side above us; and the ground, wind, and general conditions being in our favour, I brought off an easy and successful stalk, dropping him, though into awkward ground. One of the orderlies, no less than Karbir, was quite equal to the occasion, and to see him descending an awkward bit of conglomerate with the body of the animal² slung by the feet from his forehead, was an exhibition of strength and skill not to be forgotten by me. Another of

¹ Pāri, local name for cliff.

² Weight of a large oorial about 150 lbs.

the orderlies, one Raghubir Thapa by name, and Karbir took turns to carry the carcass into Darang and across the difficult pāri which still lay between us and easy ground, while the rest of us added their rifles and loads to our already heavy ones. Darang is on the right bank, and some 400 feet above the river; but on arrival at our side of the bank opposite we found bullock-skin rafts waiting, for we had evidently been seen, and some Baltis, from the post already established, ready to help. We got into camp just as the light quite failed.

Darang is a small village with few houses and few fields, on a little plateau some few hundreds of feet above the Indus. It made a good forwarding station, but, militarily speaking, was quite indefensible, commanded on three sides by hills. Luckily, however, the Ghor people, whose settlements were between 3000 and 4000 feet directly above, were by this time at least quite neutral, and the road from down the river led across a very steep pāri immediately in front of the post, and easily under fire from it and from its neighbourhood. The camp was very near the edge of the cliff, proper precautions to protect the edge had not been made, and on the night of our arrival my unfortunate Pathan orderly managed to tumble over the edge in the dark and was instantly killed, and we had great difficulty in finding him with

torches in the dark. Shortly after our arrival I was enabled to send over further reinforcements to the advanced parties. This detachment was attacked at its first camp out, but luckily, being commanded by thoroughly knowledgeable native officers, had fortified itself on arrival in camp and successfully beat off the tribesmen, with some loss on both sides. I used to feel very sorry for the poor Balti coolies on these occasions; they could only lie low and suffer, like Brer Rabbit. Not only had they no arms, but are as unwarlike as any people in Asia almost, though stupendously patient. Notwithstanding their characteristics, I would prefer them to Kashmiris under similar circumstances, as the latter would probably have been actively cowardly and a nuisance.

There was, I believe, actually no more shooting after this last attack, and our business was to establish ourselves, and mine in general to send food through to the fort, and in particular to feed myself. Taking it all round, I don't know which was the more difficult. Some of my things had filtered through, and I now had a Whymper tent and a gun and cartridges; but for the rest, our feeding arrangements were of the most sketchy description. We had caught a few goats and had a little milk, but for some time our standard rations were a low-class form of grain, locally called

“china”; hot porridge of this, chupatties of either wheat or barley flour, goat or sheep when we could get it, and, after the arrival of my gun, chickore partridges. My Goorkha orderlies cooked for me entirely, as a servant was a superfluous luxury; or rather I myself had arrived at Bunji at a bad time for transport, and consequently had not been able to afford to bring one. My duties consisted in keeping the line open and forwarding supplies, and my pleasures in the country and in chickore shooting. For above me, at the settlement of Ghor, not only was the chickore shooting excellent, but the view from there of the Nanga Parbat group one of the most striking and beautiful sights in the world. The bed of the Indus is here but some 3000 feet above sea-level, and the summit of Nanga Parbat itself nearly 27,000 feet. From points on the Ghor mountain-side the entire range of Nanga Parbat rises directly in front of one; from river to summit all is visible; the whole structure of the range is seen; one is even able to realise the fine rise of the forest belts at medium heights, as found in the upper Yoway valley, divided as it is into the locally well-known Bulder and Rakiote valleys. A subsidiary point cuts off a view of the great Diamarai glacier and valley, but with this exception the whole of the north and north-western face is visible. A range in summer of from tropical

heat to arctic cold at one *coup d'œil*. Tropical is a wrong term: I should say Sahara heat, for the Indus Valley itself is the abomination of desolation: enormous, hideous, and terrific, and when red-hot, as it is during the summer months, to be avoided like the plague.

Chickore shooting near Ghor was exciting. I think I could have made really large bags, but I was strictly limited by my cartridge supply. The people at the time were quite untrustworthy, and the precaution had to be taken of posting sentries at suitable places to watch the hill-sides, and shooting between them. It also was laborious; an early start could not be made from Darang, as the daily service of the post required attention. When this was finished, on shooting days, we had to mount the 3000 to 4000 feet of steep slopes between Ghor and Darang before beginning shooting; but, as every one was as fit and hard as possible with the light living and hard work, it was wonderful how little we thought of it.

Still, I was a menace to any lines of communication. Occasional luxuries were forwarded by mail-bag down to the officers at the front, and generally a little toll was taken on the way, through the post, for we were really on short commons. The "Robber of Darang" was supposed to help himself from friend and foe equally, so much so that it was

considered safer to give him an invitation to Thalpen for Christmas to preserve the plum-puddings and other luxuries which were known to be on their way, and which had perforce to pass through his post. The said immoral character was off like a flash, travelling by way of the intermediate post of Gés, now occupied by the XV. Sikh Detachment, under Captain Trevor. On arrival there I was just in time to assist at a rather dramatic incident. Captain Trevor, a noted and notable shikari, had been out after markhor, for this part of the Indus is still probably one of the best markhor countries left, and one also little shot, and though the markhor is found high up in the hot summer months, in the cold, unlike the ibex, he often descends to quite low altitudes. He was, with his Gilgit shikari, no less, I believe, than the well-known Gul Sher Khan (*vide* Major R. L. Kennion's book on Gilgit sport), actually engaged in approaching a markhor when they found that they themselves were being stalked by a pair of Chilasi sportsmen. Leaving their markhor, by a very cunning movement, they managed, as the Irishman said, to completely surround the Chilasis on three sides, and secured one of them and his gun, the other managing to make his escape on the unsurrounded side. They brought in their prisoner in triumph.

Let it be well understood that this raid, or

whatever name one wants to call it, was not war. It was a thoroughly important and sporting move which included fighting, and a political necessity, and finally, a political success, but it had no pretensions to being war; if it had been, Captain Trevor would not have been out shooting, and further, even if he had been, his prisoner under the circumstances would have soon been gracing Abraham's bosom: well, I don't think much happened to him: he took a sporting chance and lost; I don't think even Captain Trevor himself bore him any ill-will. We went on to Thalpen next day, the scene of the real fighting, and paid a visit to Chilas, where I found my friend Moberly busily engaged in making himself a fort, fit for habitation, and well above the tribesmen's village. Even in December the pull up to the village was warm, the usual horrid sand. Chilas showed the usual signs, being fertile wherever water can be obtained, but desolation reigns outside this very limited area. Even at this season we were bitten by the Pipsa fly, locally called the Chilas fly. He was just as bad as his relation in Garhiwal, though at this period of the year there were not very many of him, just enough to pay attention to strangers. Personally, I have a special attraction for this fly; in the matter of flies the personal equation plays a great part; the mosquito bites

me and dies a painful death, having warned his intimate friends to leave me alone ; even the sand-fly bites, suffers, and goes ; the flea is happy and at home ; but the Pipsa fly goes for me as if I was his long-lost brother, and he is the worst of all, for his bite lasts longer.

Shortly after my visit to Chilas, I was recalled to accompany Dr. Robertson to Chitral, but not before we had managed from Darang to make a path over the difficult pāri there, and generally to enjoy ourselves. I managed to explore the left bank as far as the Bunder nullah, and also by the way to shoot many more chickore, and finally to remove the post of Darang down the Indus to Domussel ; this place, I believe, is now called Jailpur ; it is an awful spot, but more suitably situated as a post on a line of communication than Darang. I had in my post at Darang several men implicated in the attack on Captain Twigg, two of whom, at least, were finally executed. Sending my troops and the heavy transport, to wit, the Balti coolies, round by the main road on the left bank, with the help of the two raftsmen and the prisoners, I descended the rapids on two skin rafts from Darang to Domussel ; and a most exciting time I had of it, considerably accentuated by the fact that I am a most indifferent swimmer, and the rapids are very considerable. Further, it was winter and

the river low, which means that the immense boulders in the river-bed have less to cover them. Karbir was in one raft and myself in another. My crew consisted of one boatman and one assassin: the assassins were first-class and most attentive, most cheerful and happy, one quite an old man. Every one quite entered into the spirit of the thing, and I felt really pleased at having at least given one pleasant half-holiday to men so uncomfortably situated.

Thus ended the first stage of the Chilas raid, for the Gilgit district a most important incident; for had not another and much more direct route been secured to the Punjab *via* the Kaghan Valley? A route which has subsequently been opened out and a good road made. It was but the first stage, however, for three months later a most serious attempt was made by the tribe to retake Chilas and to turn the Kashmir Government out. Beyond that, it gave occasion for one of the most gallant actions fought on the frontier for many years, and one of the most fiercely fought out too, into the bargain. Shortly, as we showed no signs of giving up the territory we had acquired, in fact we had already begun to improve the communications, strengthen the fort, etc., the tribesmen felt bound, I suppose, to make one more attempt to get back their independence; for was it not certain that they would have to lead law-abiding lives, give up raiding, and

generally settle down and change their habits, if once they were brought under Kashmir-British rule? Their attempt was a most sporting one. They seized, in March 1903, Chilas village in force: they were far superior to the garrison there. Luckily, the British officers in the garrison there were not beginners: Major Daniell, of the 1st P.I., was in command, and as his second in command was my friend Moberly, a Dogra officer. Major Daniell's life had been spent on the frontier; he understood the temperament and outlook of the tribesmen well, whether Pathan or mountaineer, for he was as well known as a sportsman as he was as a soldier. On the early morning of March 20th he ordered Moberly to make a reconnaissance around the village of Chilas itself. This meant that he had to descend from their very indifferent little fort to the village below and endeavour to discover what force of tribesmen were in the village; a most dangerous job, I may here remark, and exceptionally well carried out, though Moberly himself got a graze from a bullet in the head, and the subsequent proceedings did not interest him for some time after. Finally Daniell determined to attack the village, and sallied out with four-fifths of his garrison. A very sharp fight ensued, Major Daniell himself and four or five native officers of his force being killed, and at least one-third of the whole garrison being killed and

wounded ; but such was the punishment inflicted on the invading tribesmen, although the attack itself was unsuccessful, that they had no stomach for any more fighting, and evacuated the position that evening. Moberly had a most anxious time—himself hurt, so many of his men either killed or wounded, and the rest very over-strained ; but, luckily, daylight brought relief.

Thus ended the Chilas incident. For the original move to Chilas, I fancy there were many heart-burnings and some recriminations. I had not had anything to do with that, it did not affect me ; all I know is that it gave me one of the times of my life, and that political considerations did not count. I did what I was told to do only, and, in doing so, seldom if ever enjoyed myself more, and seldom if ever had such an educative experience. The move may have been daring, and may have been unauthorised, but the taking of Chilas had to come, and the results have been undoubtedly most important for that district. Further, it was done by the officer responsible for the move in the most dashing style, and, compared to other frontier expeditions, especially the majority, in which the results have been nil, most economically. We were deluged with rewards ; they arrived in the form of bills.

Queer World !

CHAPTER IX

CHILAS AND NANGA PARBAT

AT the present day there is a high-road, *i.e.* a pony road, from the Punjab to Gilgit, with Government rest-houses at each stage. One can canter, provided one is in good condition, from Bunji to Chilas in a day. But I am jealous: no matter how they try and how contemptuously the present representatives of the old Special Service officers look down on their puny efforts in the matter of locomotion, they still must suffer from the sun and still must suffer from the Chilas fly; they will, at any rate, get burnt and bitten if they will not allow that we found difficulty in actually travelling the country. Gilgit valleys are horrible, and yet those who have been there and have been bitten (by the country, not by the other things) want to go back. I think it is the free life and the scope, the enormous space, and the prodigious scale. The least enthusiastic hillman cannot fail to be impressed by the views from the heights, and the most enthusiastic cannot fail to have sat in the valleys and

"cussed" at them, but he does not forget them either. No matter how ugly, they are not commonplace. This is not a Sahara, a flatterer of the senses; it is a producer of human beings, not automata; physicalness may be rather too apparent, and unconventionality, but it is in the long-run healthy and strenuous.

I left the Indus Valley by the New Year, as I had been detailed to accompany Dr. Robertson to Chitral, to which disturbed area he had been deputed to place the eldest son of the late Mehtar, or ruling prince, on the throne, and by so doing to bring home to the Chitralis that he had the moral support of the Kashmir and British Government. I did not return to Chilas and its neighbourhood, or rather only to the neighbourhood, as I did not actually descend to Chilas itself, until 1895, when I joined Messrs. Mummery, Hastings, and Collie on their mountaineering expedition to explore and try to climb Nanga Parbat. Earlier in the summer I had received, whilst in the Kaghan Valley, a letter from England telling me of the proposed expedition, and asking me to help them in any way I could. At the time I was encamped in one of the high valleys of Kaghan, under the peak of Shikara in fact, and unfortunately the whole camp, that is the Goorkha part of it and myself, went down with mumps, so that, until I thought I

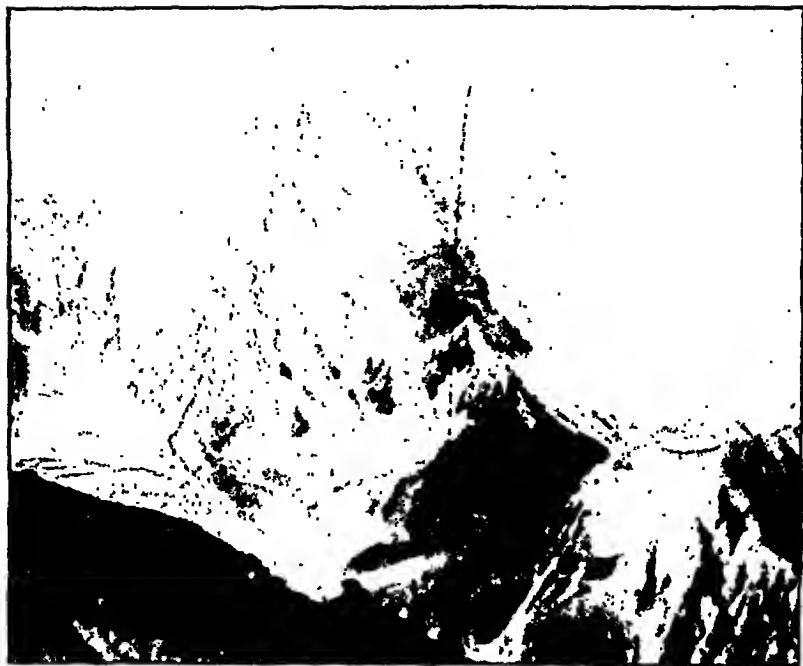
was quite cured, I was unable to do anything to assist Mr. Mummery, except to write letters to certain people, warning them to expect me. When I had finally apparently recovered, we made what I still consider a most sporting march to Sopur, over the Kaghan and the Droua ridges, crossed the Kishenganga river, thence through Kashmir proper to Sopur and Bandipur, arriving in four days, and only just in time to engage ponies and make some other minor arrangements before the arrival of the party. My leave also was at an end, and I had to fly at full speed back to my regiment. I met my party at a broken bridge on the Kashmir carriage-road, for the monsoon had broken, and so terrific are the storms and so rotten the hill-sides between Kashmir and the Punjab plains that at this time of year it is almost impossible to prevent the road from being frequently blocked. There is also, from a European point of view, a very limited amount of money available.

Mr. Mummery informed me that General Sir William Lockhart had given him leave to take with him two Goorkha soldiers, whom I was to choose for him; he also gave me a very pressing invitation to return and bring them with me. It was all a matter of leave: I had already completed my full allowance. However, that difficulty had been got over by telegram, and my transport

arrangements were also made in the same way, ready for my return. My two Goorkhas were fitted out and despatched with our very light camp and equipment. Business detained me for two days in my station, and then I proceeded to follow myself. Having but one month's leave, I could not let the grass grow under my feet: so, knowing that I should be nowhere delayed on the road, as everything was ready, I pushed on to catch my Goorkhas at Domel, on the main Kashmir road. Everything was ready there, luggage on the tonga waiting for me, and that night Garhi was reached; two more days found us in Bandipur, where transport ponies were awaiting us. These we loaded with the lightest of loads, and took a couple of spare animals into the bargain. To show how light our outfit was, I may mention that myself, Goorkhas, and luggage all fitted into one tonga. From Bandipur we marched by the usual route as hard as we could go, and arrived in Astor on the fourth day, the evening of the same day finding me at Captain Stewart's camp in Chongra, a beautiful alp high up on the Nanga Parbat slopes, and close to the snout of the short Chongra glacier itself. Here I was obliged to spend a day to rearrange, not that it was any hardship, for I was tired, and, further, had found an old friend whom I had not seen for many years. I also made the discovery

that, owing to the hurry in packing, my servant had left my thick mountaineering clothes behind, a mistake for which I was sufficiently to suffer later on.

Two days later found me at Tarshing, in the Rupal, and at the Mummery party's base camp. I found it, as I had rather expected it to be, empty. But I must say I was surprised to hear that they were still on the other side of the range, though shortly expected. This gave an opportunity for the Goorkhas and myself to have a little practice in the seracs of the glaciers running down from Nanga Parbat. Raghubir Thapa, who was a first-rate rock-climber, had been with me in Chilas and Chitral in 1902-1903. He was a first-rate man in every way, and had once or twice been on a rope under the instruction of his companion and friend Karbir Burathoki. The other boy was new, though, of course, a born hillman, and full of keenness. The following day after our arrival the climbing party's porters arrived, and we were informed by the Kashmir shikari who was with them that they had disappeared into the mountains, where there was no road at all, and that they didn't know where they had arrived, but that at any rate they themselves had obeyed orders and had come back. I had with me to help with coolies, etc., a young Kashmir shikari, Guffara of Bandipur by name, who had been with me on Conway's expedition,



THE CHONGRA PEAKS FROM THE NORTH.



POINT REACHED
BY MUMERY
AND RIFLEMAN
RAGHUBIR
SHAWA.

NANGA PARBAT FROM THE DIAMARAI VALLEY.

and who is very much better than the average Kashmiri in every way. He was able to reassure them; for had not the sahibs gone to survey, and, further, was not he also a pupil of Zurbriggen Gora (the white), and had not he been in much bigger mountains with him? The usual Kashmir brags, but here it served its purpose. They were reassured, especially as the shikari had been out on a rock-climb with Mummery and Collie, and nearly been scared to death, though I am bound to say that this particular man was a very poor specimen indeed, and as big a thief as he was poser. He was, further, a most indifferent shikari.

The Kashmir shikari has a great name, and amongst them, no doubt, are some excellent men; but they are few and far between. They have, however, their uses, and that is to arrange one's caravan, get coolies and supplies, etc. on the march. They thoroughly, as a rule, understand camp life, and what the European sportsman or traveller requires, and also usually the habitat of the game; but how often does it happen that the Kashmiri gets hold of the local hillmen, not only to assist him in finding the game, but to bring his employer within shooting distance of it? Even if the Kashmiri be a really qualified shikari and a hard worker, I do not believe that one can be found the equal of the best Gilgit or Chitral men. As many

sportsmen have long distances to travel, all nearly coming through Kashmir proper, the many other good qualities of the Kashmiri are invaluable to them. They are also, as a rule, rather dishonest, and often trouble has been made by the Kashmiri taking a percentage of the money paid for supplies bought from the hill people, and often even a percentage of the wages paid to porters. This shikari in particular was a first-class rogue, and took advantage of the disability of the party to speak any Hindustani. Knowing, when I was not there, that he had to be the go-between, at first at any rate, he was up to every form of rascality. He was finally caught in the act, and received summary justice.

Our camp above Tarshing was delightful, and what is called in that country with emphasis "bilkul maidan," which means "absolutely flat." When a maidan is called "bilkul" it means, as in this case, that there is room to pitch one's camp and have plenty of space around it to move about in. Other maidans, or plains, are those places where one hasn't to use one's hands in climbing; this is partially an exaggeration and partially not, as I have often been told that a road was quite flat which seemed to me to be ascending or descending the whole way. What they mean to convey is that it is easy to travel.

The village of Tarshing itself is situated directly

under the south face of Nanga Parbat, near the mouth of the Rupal nullah. It is a typical village of the country, and has quite a large population, and plenty of supplies are obtainable. We were very lucky in being able to make our base camp so near to our marketing place. The people too were very friendly and ready to assist, and afterwards supplied us with quite a large train of coolies. Without help from above, by which I refer to the powers that be in the Gilgit Agency, no doubt so many men would not have been forthcoming; but we had little difficulty with them, although they had a pretty rough time. They did not seem to me to have half the character of the other Gilgit peoples, but rather to resemble Baltis in this respect. They invariably talked with great respect of the Chilasi tribes, and evidently traditionally feared them. For before our occupation of Gilgit the Chilasi and Bunar tribesmen had on occasion raided over the Mazeno Pass at the head of the Rupal Valley and were well remembered. The Rupal Valley is some twenty-five miles long, and lies at the foot of the Nanga Parbat *massif*. At its head lie the Mazeno and Thosho Passes leading over into Chilas territory.

The whole situation is quite remarkable. The south face of Nanga Parbat is well known to all travellers in Kashmir, and is the great sight from

the summer station of Gulmarg; from the Rupal nullah it rises almost sheer from nearly 15,000 feet. So often when travelling directly among great mountains one cannot realise the heights above one; in the Garhwal Mountains, for instance, when one sees nothing of the great heights from the enclosed valleys. But in the Rupal from many points one quite takes in Nanga Parbat; there are so many snouts of small glaciers pushed across the valley, and the valley itself is not crushed in. And although, of course, shut in, one can still see and take in the prodigious scale. On the south-west and south of the valley are the really quite beautiful series of 20,000 footers, the Thosho, Rupal, Chiche, and other points. Anywhere, except in the Himalaya, this group would take its place, and is beyond doubt very wonderful. Unfortunately, Nanga Parbat quite dwarfs his little understudies. Still, the ice scenery at the head of the nullah is very fine where the main Rupal glacier pours down in a series of ice-falls from the Thosho and Rupal peaks. To reach our camp from Tarshing one has to cross the Tarshing glacier. Our camp itself had been established in a clump of willows on a small grassy alp, and was most picturesquely situated. We had all we wanted, wood and water in plenty, and shade from the burning midsummer sun, which, as I have said before, is very hot at

even considerable heights at this time of year. The evenings were delightful, and nights quite cool, for the camp was at a considerable height above sea-level; Dr. Collie gives it as 9900 feet.

On the evening of the second day after our arrival I had come in from a scramble on the ice with the men, and, changing into the lightest possible costume, with a native choga or cloak over me, had gone for a stroll up the valley. After going about a mile I espied a weary figure coming towards me; it turned out to be Collie, who had come on in front, leaving Hastings and Mummery resting behind,—and no wonder, for I think that very seldom has more been done in one single expedition than their last climb and tramp back to the base camp. Some few days before my arrival at the base camp all three, Mummery, Hastings, and Collie, had left to look at the westerly and north-westerly faces of Nanga Parbat. Their way led them over the Mazeno Pass. The Rupal is by no means as bare as a Hindu Koosh valley generally is, but glaciers from the main Nanga Parbat ridge have in some places to be crossed, and they are invariably moraine-covered, and in other places there are great accumulations of stones.

At this time of year the rise to the Mazeno Pass itself is about as big a grind as any pass

affords. Earlier in the year while there is still plenty of snow it is probably only ordinarily laborious, but once the snow is off, one's work is trebled. The way—one cannot say path—consists almost entirely of boulders of all sizes; luckily they are not all loose. It is not, generally speaking, a very steep ascent, but the continual struggle in the loose boulders is most wearisome, and no doubt the height adds to the fatigue. The summit of the pass is 18,000 feet above sea-level, so one has every right to be wearied and worried. The descent on the Chilas side is very much better, though a good deal more difficult. An easy though steep rock arête leads down to the glacier, though near the bottom some care must be taken in crossing a steep gully to gain access to the glacier, as one is rather exposed at this point to falling stones, and some few steps may also have to be cut. They followed the glacier down and traversed several ridges below the snow-line into the then unexplored Diamarai nullah. There they pitched their camp, not far from where our larger and more permanent camp was subsequently to be. They saw for the first time the great Diamarai glacier, looked down into the gorge by which it disappears into the Indus, and looked up that wonderful north-west face of Nanga Parbat itself that was subsequently to see some of the most daring

mountaineering that has ever been accomplished, and I am afraid some of the most reckless also.

The photograph of this face will give some idea of its structure, but can give no real idea of its magnificence. I think every one who has done any mountaineering will understand that Mr. Mummery's decision to attack the mountain by this face, as he considered the south face to be quite out of the question, shows the really terrific hopelessness of the southern face. It would be a wrong use of terms to speak of the southern slopes of Nanga Parbat; there are no slopes for many many thousands of feet below the summit.

This first expedition to the Diamarai was only intended for exploration purposes, and so the party had rapidly to return. The coolies with the baggage were all sent back by the way they had come, which had not yet arrived at being called the ordinary route. The three climbers, taking as little food as possible, this being one of the characteristics of this expedition, proceeded to try and find a pass over the south ridge which would land them on to the actual ridge of the Mazeno Pass. A most sporting idea; but it did not work out quite as they had expected it to do, though they were proud of themselves, after they had got in and had a good sleep; even the last day was something to look back on. They started about

midnight and had a first-rate climb to the top of the ridge south of the Diamarai valley, all the upper part splendid climbing, with the exception of an awkward traverse across unstable snow when nearing the summit, on which they arrived after fourteen hours of very hard work at 2 P.M. It was undoubtedly a first-rate bit of mountaineering, but it did not lead to the Mazeno Pass, but only down to the glacier on the Chilas side of the Mazeno itself; the only way over to food and shelter was to descend to the ordinary Mazeno route and then reascend the Mazeno Pass; from that point a mere trifle of 20 miles of boulders, glaciers, and grass slopes would finally bring them to their main camp. Further, their food was finished. They scrambled down at their best pace, and were down at the foot of the pass by nightfall; and then began what must have seemed a nightmare. The struggle, however tired, to the summit could not have been so bad although they were very tired and it was dark, as the going was fairly good and steep, and under those circumstances one feels one is making ground all the time; but from the summit down, scrambling all night, dead beat, with only the light of an Alpine lantern, there is no word in the English language adequate to express it. Finally, Collie arrived, and by evening Mummery and Hastings turned up on ponies sent to meet

them and bring them in over the easier parts of the Rupal.

We spent some more time in the Rupal before leaving for the Diamarai again, for Mummery had determined to make his attack on the mountain from that side. We took the opportunity of taking the Goorkhas out for a more ambitious expedition, for Mummery wanted to see what they could do before he took them out on any serious climbing. Crossing the Tarshing glacier we mounted the ridge immediately above Tarshing village and camped there the night. The next day was quite delightful, alternate rock-climbing and looking at the view, which is not here necessarily resting but a very serious occupation. I was able to point out many of the great Hunza peaks which I personally knew, and also the still greater, if possible, Mustagh Mountains; finally, we had some very difficult climbing, for me at least, down a rock ridge direct to the Tarshing glacier. Mummery was very pleased with the Goorkhas, and I was very pleased with myself.

We were now ready to move over to the Diamarai and make a depot camp there. On 30th July, everything being ready, we started up to the head of the Rupal nullah, with the whole caravan, a really quite formidable array. Mummery, our leader, was absolutely disgusted at the idea of

dragging over the Mazeno stones again, and determined to try and find a pass direct to the head of the Diamarai, that is, over the main Nanga Parbat ridge. Now this ridge does not descend below 20,000 feet until the Mazeno Pass is reached, and further the far side is frightfully precipitous. Hastings was able to join us on this occasion; he had been much troubled by a wound on his foot, which was not healing well, but, as he said, he had to cross the pass, and so had much better come with us than face the stones again. Raghbir also was with us. The main caravan servants, shikaries, porters, were all sent in charge of Gaman Sing, the other Goorkha, with orders to proceed direct to the Diamarai. The luggage arrived without difficulty, but we were out for a holiday. To begin with, as usual, very little food was taken; this quaint step added to our experience, and has ever since been a lesson to me. We started at one o'clock in the morning and immediately up a steep moraine by the light of our Alpine lamps. One never gets away from moraine, and moraine at night is more than usually irritating. We climbed continually upwards till five o'clock in the evening.

I had previously been rather uncomfortable with something like mountain sickness, caused partly by fatigue and partly by a tight feeling in my throat,

which I attributed, and rightly, to the mumps which I had had in Kaghan. No doubt the mumps were not properly cured when I crossed the snow pass of Shikara on my way to make preparations in Kashmir. I soon recovered, but at this point, as the pass still seemed a very long way off, and it was certain that we would be benighted, Collie and I thought we would rather sit out on a less exposed spot. We were on a ridge leading directly to the main Nanga Parbat ridge, and looking on its western side directly down to the Mazeno glacier, with the pass *en face* and below us.

Mummery and Hastings said they would push farther up. So Collie, Raghubir, and myself started off downwards again, taking the first ridge running to the west or towards the Mazeno side ; but we did not get very far, for the ridge was steep rock, very hard snow, and ice. We had a good deal of step-cutting to do too, so we were not very far down when the light began to fail. The ridge was far too difficult to climb with the help of a lantern, so it became necessary to stop at the first possible halting-place. Here is Dr. Collie's account taken from his book, *Climbing on the Himalaya*, etc. : " Finally, as the sun was setting, we found a crack running through the arête into which a flat stone had got jammed, just large enough for three people to sit on. Here we made up our minds to stop for

the night. Roughly, we were 19,000 feet, or 1000 feet higher than the Mazeno La, about two or three miles to the eastward of it. A stone thrown out on either side of our small perch would have fallen many hundreds of feet before hitting anything, so we did not take off the rope, but huddled together as best we could to keep warm. . . . How we tried in vain to get into positions such that the freezing wind would not penetrate our clothes, how Bruce and Raghubir groaned and how we suffered—but I will refrain. Let any one who may be curious on the subject of a night out on a rock ridge at 19,000 feet, try it; but he must place himself in such a position that, twist and turn as he may, he still encounters the cold jagged rocks with every part of his body, and though he shelter himself ever so wisely, he must feel the wind steadily blowing beneath his shirt.”

To continue Collie's account, we got our feet into the two rucksacks. I was lucky in one thing and one only—I had very long and good putties; one I wound round my waist, and with the other I bound up my feet, thus keeping them comparatively warm, but though I had a warm jersey that had been in the rucksack, I had on only a thin flannel suit, for, as I said before, my mountaineering clothes were enjoying ill-earned repose in Abbottabad. We all three tucked up as close as possible

for warmth, but of the three, Collie was the most philosophical. Later in the night we heard Hastings and Mummery descending, and shouted to them. They could not get to us, but managed to anchor themselves higher up; they also dropped an axe, which we were lucky enough to get back the following morning.

The early morning found us very very stiff, but with no further damage, and after Collie, in the most skilful manner, had cooked half a cup of chocolate with melted snow over three inches of candle, we felt fairly revived. We got down to the Mazeno glacier at last, but in front of us lay the horrid tangle of boulders leading to the pass over which, unless we returned, it was absolutely necessary for us to go to rejoin our baggage. The sun was now well up and warm and the weather perfect; if it had not been so we should really have had an awful time. Hastings, Mummery, and myself promptly went to sleep; water was plentiful and very refreshing, and that at any rate helped us to bear the want of food. Collie, who had remembered their last trip over the Mazeno, like a wise man started off with Raghbir. I must here again quote Collie's account: "Very slowly we toiled and toiled upwards through the already softened snow; but long before we reached the summit, more than once Raghbir had laid

down on the ground exhausted. I found out later that he had eaten nothing whatever the day before. Ultimately, we got to the top and rested a while. Our mission was to get to Lubar (Lubar is the name of the highest alp on the Chilas side, where we knew we should find flocks of goats and sheep), and from there send back up the glacier milk and meat to the remainder of the expedition. It was already mid-day, and here was I with a Goorkha who could scarcely crawl, and the rest of the party perhaps in a worse condition far behind. So, after a short rest, I started down from the pass on the west side, soon leaving Raghubir behind. Then I waited for him. Repeating these tactics he was enticed onwards again until crossing an ice-couloir rendered dangerous through falling stones, I walked out on to the level glacier to await him. Very slowly he crawled down, and when in the centre of the couloir, although I screamed to him to hurry, he was nearly hit by a stone weighing half a hundredweight, that had come from 2000 to 3000 feet above. Although it only missed him by a few feet, he never changed his face, and when at last he reached me, seated on a stone, he dropped full length on the ice, absolutely refusing to move and groaning. He had eaten nothing for forty hours!"

Collie here awaited our arrival. We had put in quite a good sleep and then started for the ascent,

but although much refreshed it was the most awful grind, we were so tired and hungry ; we took the rocks and soft snow in short pieces, generally sitting down after doing a hundred yards or so, until finally the summit was reached ; the descent was really quite pleasant, and I think we all three began to revive. After spending a short time with Collie and getting Raghubir on to his legs again, we set off for the Lubar alp at the best pace we could muster, and arrived there sufficiently before day to buy and kill and begin to cook a sheep while we could see what we were doing. Milk was also forthcoming in considerable quantities, or rather enormous quantities. We had descended quite 7000 feet from the top of the pass, Lubar being about 11,000 ; not a bad final effort for tired men, for one must also remember that moraine-hopping is always with one. I had revived very much during the latter part of the walk down, and by dinner-time was quite fit again. Prospective food always cheers me prodigiously, and as the success of our dinner that night depended on my efforts, I was made doubly cheerful. The five of us left only just enough of that sheep to make a light breakfast of next morning : he was cut up and cooked on sticks in double quick time. We had again no covering, but what does that matter when there is firewood ; we tucked up together

and slept the dreamless sleep of the just; not even the heavy hoar-frost that fell in the morning had any effect whatever on our sleeping powers.

We had still a good day's work before us before reaching the Diamarai nullah, but instead of keeping low down, we went a new route, and much more direct, though, as there was some 6000 feet of uphill to be negotiated, rather trying after our hard work of the last two days. From the summit I got my first view of that part of Diamarai and of the great north-western face. But the view in every way was notable; in the extreme west Collie recognised Tirich Mir in the Chitral portion of the Hindu Koosh, and between that mountain and our position a mass of mountains, belonging to the Hindu Raj range, and south of it in the Swat Kohistan; the mountains of Tangir and Darel to the north were also very clear. The descent to camp was nearly direct, but over the most peculiarly disagreeable stones; I am not certain, it is hard to differentiate, but my recollection of them is that they were almost the most annoying that I encountered. We spent two days of complete repose in camp, though my neck began to trouble me. Our camp lying directly under the moraine of the Diamarai glacier, I was able to climb to the top and have a look at it, but did nothing more ambitious, for my leave was finished, and as

permission had been refused me to return by the direct route *via* the Babusar Pass and Kaghan on account of raiders being about, I had to make the much longer and more tedious round over the Mazeno, Kamri, and Rajdiangan Passes.

The weather was gorgeous, and we had a first-class opportunity of looking with our glasses for a way up Nanga Parbat. I must say it was a fearsome face that looked down on us, 14,000 feet of the steepest rocks, snow, and ice, but still not so hopeless as the south face; the real difficulty was evidently the enormous scale; at least three nights would have to be spent on the mountain, and the climbing looked so very difficult that it seemed impossible to get even the lightest equipment up.

The third day after our arrival in Diamarai saw my return, this time by the original route taken by our party on their first visit. We made the Lubar shepherd huts in one march. There I met a Chilasi shikari, Lor Khan by name, and sent him on to Mummery; he was quite a young man, and looked very useful, a very different man from their Kashmiri. He was, I afterwards heard, very useful in many ways and was a first-rate rock-climber, and probably would have been equally good all round if he had been properly booted for the work; but the local "Taoti" is not suited to snow and ice. We had rather bad weather the following day over

the Mazeno, wind and snow on the summit, and hurried down into the valley as fast as the boulders would allow us. We made a most comfortable camp in some brushwood, "we" being my shikari Guffara and myself; the next day, in the afternoon, we reached our original base camp. I now knew for certain that there was something seriously wrong with my neck, and I was most anxious to get on; it had swollen so much that a friend I met on the road failed to recognise me, and I should have had a very bad time indeed, if on arrival in Guraïs I had not been seized and hospitably entertained by another friend, who also mounted me, so that I was able to cross the Rajdiangan Pass in comfort; my subsequent journey by the ordinary Kashmir route to the Panjab I had rather not dwell on, for it was very hot, I had few comforts in the way of clothes, owing to being obliged to travel so light in the first instance, and my neck and head had become like a blown-out football. On my arrival home I had to take to my bed for six weeks and undergo a very unpleasant operation, and after that for more than a year I was unable to wear a collar.

After I left the Diamarai my friends set about the real exploration of Nanga Parbat itself, climbing for observation purposes the Diamarai peaks, and also pushing their camps, the very lightest possible, directly up the rock rib in the centre of

the photograph. They had some most magnificent climbs, which Collie describes as resembling the conditions found on the Chamounix aiguilles; Lor Khan took part in two of these expeditions and Raghubir in all. Gaman Sing had returned to Astor to help Hastings, who found it necessary to undergo the horrid grind of again crossing the Mazeno and to bring up stores and provisions which had been sent on from Kashmir and were waiting for them there. Then storms occurred in the Diamarai, and there was a fairly heavy fall of snow. The return of fine weather determined Mummery to make a serious attempt on the mountain without waiting for Hastings' return, as the season was late, and they were afraid that a recurrence of bad weather would very likely close the mountain for the season.

It was August 18th when a start was made. Collie, Mummery, and Raghubir mounted to the first camp already prepared high up on the glacier, at about 15,000 feet, in fact, and slept there for the night. The next morning Collie was not well, certainly not sufficiently well to take part in so severe an expedition, so that it was decided that Mummery with Raghubir alone should go on by themselves. They were out on the mountain for two nights and three days, ascending by the precipitous ridge which they had previously explored,

for a more feasible route. It was necessary to take the baggage round by a most tiring and tiresome route, in fact, to skirt the side of the mountain, which meant, of course, crossing several ridges and valleys, and the ridges on a mountain of this scale necessarily are enormous. The ridge on the north of the Diamarai Valley culminates in the Ganalo peak of over 21,000 feet, which is itself connected to the main mass of Nanga Parbat by a col. From this col descended a branch of the Diamarai glacier, called the Diama glacier; once over the Diama Pass one looks directly down into the Rakiot Valley. Mummery determined to try and cross this col and rejoin the camp in Rakiot; he made provision, though, for failure by leaving rucksacks with provisions below, so that in case he was unable to make his way over, he would return and follow the porters round. The narrow valley of the Diama glacier lies directly under the precipices of Nanga Parbat, and high up hanging glaciers are very much in evidence; it is a distinctly dangerous-looking valley. Mummery with the two Goorkhas left on the 23rd, taking the Chilasi shikari and another man to carry a few extra provisions; on the 24th these men returned, and Mummery and the Goorkhas left for the pass. They were never seen again.

Meanwhile the camp arrived in Rakiot, and for

the first time saw the Rakiot side of the Diamia Pass. It looked quite hopeless. On the following day, as Mummery's party had not appeared, both Collie and Hastings imagined, as was natural, that he had returned to where he had left his provisions and was following the camp round. They waited for Mummery for two days more, and then, getting anxious, Hastings returned to look for him; still no great anxiety was felt, and Collie continued east, finally crossing the Rakiot eastern ridge below the beautiful Chongra peaks and descending on Astor, thus having made a complete tour of the mountains. Here on September 5th Collie learnt that Hastings had failed to find Mummery, that his camp and provisions were just as he had left them; there is no other exit of any kind from the Diamia glacier, and it was known that the party had not crossed the col. There was only one conclusion to draw, which was that they had been killed on their way up to the pass. The exact cause of the accident can now never be known, but it was almost certainly an ice avalanche, such as are so common on Nanga Parbat. A slip is out of the question, for Mummery was one of possibly the most accomplished amateurs there have ever been, and both the Goorkhas were first-rate on their legs.

I wonder whether Nanga Parbat will ever be

climbed; it is probably as difficult a mountain as there is to tackle, for nothing but the very lightest camps can be taken high up, and even to get to one's camping-places the climbing is terrific. Even on the Diamarai side on the glacier comparatively easy going ends at 15,000 feet, leaving 12,000 more of the hardest work. On the southern face there is 15,000 feet of difficulty. At present it seems beyond the strength of man. The Astor district has been celebrated as a shooting centre for a great number of years; as a mountaineering centre it might become equally well known, but unfortunately it has been found necessary to exclude the general public. A certain number of shooting passes are allowed to sportsmen every year, and probably a climbing party would now be allowed also, if that party brought its own supplies in with it and did not trouble the country. The big peaks are all difficult besides being enormous, but there is a great deal of interesting information to be got about the Rupal peaks and Thosho Pass; I have not heard of any one crossing the Thosho Pass, but the ice scenery must be gorgeous and well worth a journey in itself. Still, any party who intends to make a serious attack on any of these great peaks must be prepared for the very hardest work, and further, must set itself on arrival to realise the scale, by no means as easy a thing to do as it sounds.

The great advantage of the district is that it is easily reached by a good road and that pony transport can be employed up to one's base. I sincerely hope that it may be my *good luck* to have another season there before the time comes when 20,000-foot climbs are out of the question; for, alas! that time must come before very long, through increase in girth and in years, the first more or less under control, the second not to be kept at bay even by unlimited draughts of the sourest and most bacilli-laden milk.

CHAPTER X

CHITRAL

THE death of the Mehtar Aman-ul-Mulk in 1892 plunged the independent state of Chitral into a state of complete anarchy. Aman-ul-Mulk himself was a really remarkable character, a complete barbarian of the old type, with perfect manners and bearing, entirely unscrupulous, yet very religious, an earnest Mohammedan, and yet no religious bigot, absolutely without pity where his private interests or the interests of his state were concerned, and yet the only even respectable ruler that Chitral had ever had. On his death there were only two serious claimants for his throne, his eldest legitimate son, Nizam-ul-Mulk, a handsome and weak man and considered immoral even by Chitrali standards, and his younger brother, Afzul-ul-Mulk, by no means a bad person at all, although his instincts were ferocious, almost tigerish. Still he would, if he had lived, quite possibly have proved a worthy successor to his father; he had all his ferocity, but also inherited some of his good points.

He was a very plucky and active man, and by Chitrali standards was held to be rather strait-laced in his personal conduct.

There was also an uncle, a prisoner in Kabul, an able and enterprising individual, the Mehtar-jhao Sher Afzul, who later on was one of the chief organisers of the Chitrali revolt, and the subsequent assassination of Nizam-ul-Mulk, which culminated in the siege of Chitral in 1895. Afzul-ul-Mulk immediately rose to the occasion on his father's death, killed as many of his enemies, their adherents (a doubtful lot), as he could get hold of, and obliged Nizam to fly for his life, which he did forthwith and sought refuge at the Gilgit Agency with all his household belongings. Afzul-ul-Mulk's natural ferocity found full vent. His cruelties and torturings to get hold of his father's treasure were such that many of his previous adherents intrigued with his uncle, Sher Afzul, in Kabul, who, managing to escape from surveillance, probably a no easy thing to do, descended on to Chitral from Badakhshan and completely surprised Afzul-ul-Mulk actually in the fort of Chitral. Of course in the usual way his friends all went over to the strong side.

There was no chance for Afzul alone and deserted, but he died like a man. He had many good qualities, he was a really brave man, according to a description given of him to me by Sir William

Lockhart, who knew him well, exceptionally courageous and a good sportsman, rider, polo player, and swimmer, but nevertheless a tiger. Sher Afzul, his uncle, was little better, and did not really establish himself. It was his sudden descent and usurpation of Chitral that was the cause of the British and Kashmir Governments backing the claims of Nizam-ul-Mulk, who in the late autumn of 1892 moved up from Gilgit to Chitral, attended by a British force to the frontier. On the whole he was well received, Sher Afzul, his uncle, fleeing again into Afghanistan territory.

In order to give the weak Nizam a little backing it was considered necessary to send a small mission to place him on the throne and to recognise him on the part of the Kashmir and British Governments as the real ruler of the country. It was a pity that he himself was not more worthy ; he was certainly not cut out for a life under those very strenuous conditions, for he was always and under all conditions in a blue funk, and although by no means so ferocious in character as his younger brother, he was certainly not averse to a few judicious murders, though he seldom if ever had the pluck to carry them out ; and as for taking everything with a very high hand, as he ought to have done, that was quite beyond him. He had the soft word always, but never the big stick.

At the very end of December 1892 I was called up from Chilas to report myself at Gilgit and join Dr. Robertson (now Sir George), who was in command of the mission. Our party consisted besides of Captain Younghusband (now Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband), Gordon, in charge of the special escort of fifty men of the 15th Sikhs, and myself. Special outfits had to be collected for ourselves and the escort, for the weather was very cold and our road gradually ascended to the Shandur Pass, which is over 12,000. The Gilgit valleys, hot though they are in summer, are proportionately cold in winter, and the upper ends of the valleys have great extremes of heat and cold. The road from Gilgit to Chitral is about 210 miles, and a hundred of this lay at over 7000 feet above the sea. At right angles to the main chain of the Hindu Koosh a great ridge runs southwards from the neighbourhood of the Darkat and Baroghil Passes, forming the boundary and watershed between the Gilgit district and Chitral, the Gilgit water running eastward directly to the Indus at Bunji, and the Chitral water westward through the Chitral Valley. The Chitral river is at this point called the Yarkhun (the murder of the friend)—a quite suitable name, by the way, for a Chitral river—and lower down the Kunhar, which finally joins the Kabul river in the neighbourhood of Jellalabad, and so

on to the Indus at Attock in the Panjab. Our way lay west up the Gilgit Valley, gradually, as I said before, ascending.

At each halting-place our men were billeted in village houses, though of course there were sentries posted. These men were equipped with long sheep-skin coats, and their feet muffled in thick sheep-skins. But even then the cold was very trying. After the village of Ghizr no houses were available, and as it had not been found possible to bring tents for all, lean-to's had to be erected for the escort and followers of all sorts, and protection found for the animals, both private riding-ponies and transport mules and ponies.

The road from Gilgit to Chitral even in those days was passable for accustomed animals, and no animal that has spent a year in Gilgit can complain of not having had plenty of practice in crossing difficult places. Two passes cross the dividing ridge—one directly over the village of Ghizr, and one twelve miles south above the camping-ground of Langar. The first, the Chamarkand, is easy enough in summer, but too difficult for animals once the snow has fallen. We therefore had to proceed *via* the Shandur. Under these conditions the march to Langar and Ghizr was very trying, the cold really intense, and the snow about a foot deep and powdery. The Sikh escort felt it considerably.

What with their boots not being properly watertight, and having to spend a good deal of time getting loads rearranged, getting animals out of difficulties, etc., there was every chance of getting chilled, and some two or three of them were brought in suffering from incipient frost-bite. They had, however, wonderful resistance, and when one comes to think that their native country in summer is probably one of the hottest places in the world, one is struck by their power of resistance to cold. It must be remembered, however, that their home in the Panjab has a very magnificent cold weather, at least two months of which can be very cold indeed. A good resistance to both great heat and cold is a great asset for a soldier. The damaged men were at once handed over to Karbir and to me, and we set to work on them. There was some difficulty at first, as the Sikhs wished to apply hot flannels to their feet and to put their suffering brethren near fires which were already alight by the time the men had arrived. One man who was tied on to a horse was in a complete state of collapse.

It took us at least two hours' hard work before we could get his circulation restored. The men were stripped and put into sheep-skins, with sheepskins piled over them, then the affected parts were well rubbed with snow and the whole body well massaged. When the circulation began to show

signs of returning, and when it was judged to be safe, they were well rubbed with dry cloths. The returning circulation evoked many a howl, and, I'm afraid, many a black look from the other Sikhs, who did not at all like what was going on and thought their pals were being unnecessarily tortured. Finally the patients were wrapped up in sheep-skins and given hot rum and water and sent to sleep. Beyond, of course, a good deal of pain they were able to go on again the next morning; and further, which was very pleasant, the other Sikhs came up and said they were sorry for getting so angry the night before, as they hadn't understood, and thanked myself and the four Goorkhas who had assisted under Karbir's directions for the rubbings and howlings. I think this little incident broke the ice and we all became great friends afterwards.

This was our last very uncomfortable march; the passage of the Shandur proved to be particularly easy, or rather I should say much easier than was expected, for the snow was in excellent order and not too deep, generally hard and good going. I was a very feeble person the next morning; it was supposed to be mountain sickness, but it wasn't. As the schoolboy said when describing the death of Henry II., "a surfeit of lampreys set in." My surfeit was very commonplace, bully beef freely partaken of just before

starting, with dire results. Despite the surfeit, it was a most interesting walk, and the view west into Chitral really stupendous. Immediately *en face* rose the great peaks of the Buni range, some 21,000 feet in height, huge faces of slabs. I have seldom seen any faces more terrible. Seen in summer it is very fine, but as we saw it in that clear winter's morning it could compare with any mountain face I have seen. No doubt the snowy condition of the whole country enhanced the contrast with the great black slabs above; but as it then appeared it was most magnificent.

That night we camped at Laspur, the escort in comfortable Chitral houses. I think this was the coldest night we had and the coldest breakfast next morning, which we had to partake of in the open, for our own tents had to be struck and packed, no easy job in the frozen condition of everything. The thermometer, which was put up against the hot-water pot on the table, marked as low as it possibly could go, which was some 5° below zero Fahr. I don't know whether it would have gone lower if it had been able to, but it did its best. From here we marched along a very good road, for these parts, to Mastuj in two days. Mastuj is twenty-five miles north of Laspur, and is on the main Chitral river, standing in a plain of good size, which boasts one tree, and one tree only,

being at the junction of three nullahs and in a good open space. It also rejoices in winter in some of the coldest winds which it has ever been my ill luck to encounter.

Here we were met by many Chitrali notables, several of whom were old acquaintances of Robertson's. They all joined our cavalcade and accompanied us on our march to Chitral. We made a journey down the Chitral Valley lasting but six days. Typical Hindu Koosh, desolation, and oases; the road occasionally was steep, but in most places rideable. Like the inhabitants of Hunza and Gilgit, the Chitralis will ride over almost any ground, their ponies being wonderfully clever. I don't mind saying that I always hated it, and continue to do so, especially when descending; I am heavy and they are light, and that makes considerable difference at a steep angle; to come down a slope as steep as a house with the ponies' fore-legs wobbling at every step, and with an inadequate saddle, I do not look on in the light of a half-holiday. Still one has often to follow when natives lead. I have often patted myself on the back at the reflection that if the said natives were in as big a funk as I was at the time, nothing would have induced them to go at all. This may or may not have been the truth, but it consoled me. The road, as usual, though in vast

country, was so deep down that the scale was often quite hidden. Also I think that most Chitral valleys are more than ordinarily ugly; I suppose it may be that the mountain structure is more crushed up, more like a Garhwal without its beauty, for nothing can be more desolate than the average outlook.

Numerous valleys on either bank of the river lead up to Tirich Mir, on the northern main Hindu Koosh chain, and to the great group of Buni peaks. I am not aware as to whether the great ridge which, starting from opposite Laspur, forms the southern boundary of Chitral proper, dividing it from the numerous Pathan tribes to the south, belongs to the Hindu Raj range, or whether it is separately classified, but to all intents and purposes it is the same range. It is very fine as a spectacle, but not very pleasant to live in. The mouths of the different valleys which empty their waters into the Chitral river are uniformly striking, nearly always ugly and generally forbidding. The farther west one goes, the more friendly does the aspect become, but the general impression made on one from Mastuj to Chitral itself is a weary waste of mountain. We were met a march out from Chitral by Nizam-ul-Mulk and his whole court, and had to get into full uniform to receive him. Further we were led, in full

uniform, over some very unpleasant places. The road was covered with ice, and we were obliged to walk.

Now officially up in those regions any man of position attending a ceremony is an official cripple. He is seized and supported by both arms, and the more of a cripple he appears to be, the greater is his dignity and the further removed he is from the horrible suspicion that he may at any time have done any work. So as soon as we had dismounted, we were all seized upon; for the first and last time I liked and was thankful for it, for I had on a very tight uniform and a pair of very tight patent leather Wellington boots and spurs, and locomotion under these conditions was almost impossible; I simply could not keep on my legs, but was hauled along to my bearers' considerable discomfort. Finally, however, after many ceremonies, at this time novel and interesting, but later on to become intensely boring, we arrived in Chitral, and were taken down to a most elaborate meal, with most surprisingly good cooking into the bargain. The better-off Chitralis make excellent bread, and have a substitute for yeast which seems to act very well. At any rate, the whole-meal bread which they make is most palatable. We were afterwards taken up to our quarters, a very comfortable Chitrali house and garden, where there was room also for the Sikh escort, besides ourselves.

The following days were spent in diplomatic conferences by the political members of the party, and by Gordon and myself in trying to put the house and garden into a state of defence; a perfectly hopeless job. Chitral is really very picturesque, and after the usual deadly desolation of the valley, quite friendly. There are large numbers of chenar trees (the plane tree), which round the fort itself had grown to great size. This last grove was rather gruesome, as it was to all intents and purposes the public execution place.

Our position in Chitral was viewed with considerable jealousy by most of the nobles. It was felt that a Mehtar ascending the throne under British rule would rapidly be affected by British prejudices, and, for instance, would no longer be able to sell his subjects as slaves in the open market with impunity. Hence the general run of the aristocratic classes, known as the Adamzada class, were generally hostile. It was felt that their old privileges would be endangered, and felt quite rightly too, though I may say they did their best to keep them. The military strength of the British Government was not in the least understood, which is not to be wondered at when one considers for how many generations this state had been isolated.

A few Chitralis had been to Kashmir, a few as far as Peshawar, and still fewer had travelled a little in India, but they were as little able to take in what they had seen as the veriest Radical M.P. on a six weeks' tour in Bengal. Not that they had the audacity to write a book about their travels. Though the average Adamzada and the reigning family as well are orthodox Sunni Mohammedans, yet great numbers of the country people belong to the Maulai sect, as is the case in Hunza and Yasin. This sect owes religious allegiance to its own Pirs (saints) only, and, probably from the fact that they hoped for better treatment under the new régime, were in general, and as far as they dared be, on our side.

The Adamzada orthodox section, however, could only see the opposite side of the question, and were in general and secretly opposed to us. As men do not count in a completely autocratic country, the friendliness of the lower orders was of not very much assistance. It is a country where one rewards a man for what he is and not for what he does. They are all beggars, but officials and others who accompanied the mission had to be tipped, not for what they had done but for the position they held in the country, an upside-down condition which was often very trying.

The winter in Chitral, when it is fine weather

is splendid. It is very cold, almost too cold, but the climate approximates to Switzerland; the sun warm and comforting, the air light and frosty. We passed our time very pleasantly, considering the doubts about the political situation, which was never very satisfactory. We had polo, for those who could play, with the Chitralis; hockey with the escort; and a certain amount of shooting. Chitral at that time was a grand shooting country, holding quantities of markhor and oorial, but such was the condition of the country that it was not considered wise that any of us should be out alone at night.

Later on we made a tour with the Mehtar-jhao Ghulam Dastgir, one of the numerous progeny of the old ruler, Aman-ul-Mulk, and half-brother of the Mehtar whom the mission had established. But on this occasion we went with a large escort and also in charge of the Mehtar-jhao, who was made responsible for us. He took us up into the western valleys which border on Kafiristan proper, and a most interesting journey we had. "We" meant Gordon and myself. These western valleys of Chitral were at that time inhabited almost entirely by slave Kafirs, known as Kalash, who were owned body and soul by their Chitral masters. They are idolaters, and besides quite distinct from the much finer race of the Kafirs across the border

in Kafiristan proper. Their dress and physique are apparently quite different; also their language differs to a very great extent. We had already seen a good many of the true Kafirs in the Chitral bazaar, most of whom had come in to see Robertson, the only Englishman who has lived among that most interesting people.

The Lockhart Mission in 1885 had crossed from Chitral territory and marched down the Bashgol Valley, being everywhere well received, but had not had either time or opportunity to see very much of the people. They saw enough, however, to provide a great deal of curious information about them. Robertson, in 1890-91, had lived amongst them for over six months, and had had an opportunity of studying their habits, and of leaving on hand a complete account of a people now impossible to obtain. For some few years after our visit in 1893 the Amir Abdurrahman Khan of Afghanistan invaded the country, and after great difficulty conquered the whole of it, deporting some tribes, and making the rest Mohammedans by force, and destroying as far as possible all their old customs. The only true Kafirs now to be found are those who were able to escape, and fled into Chitral territory, where they were given land. Our present trip with Ghulam Dastgir took us up to the

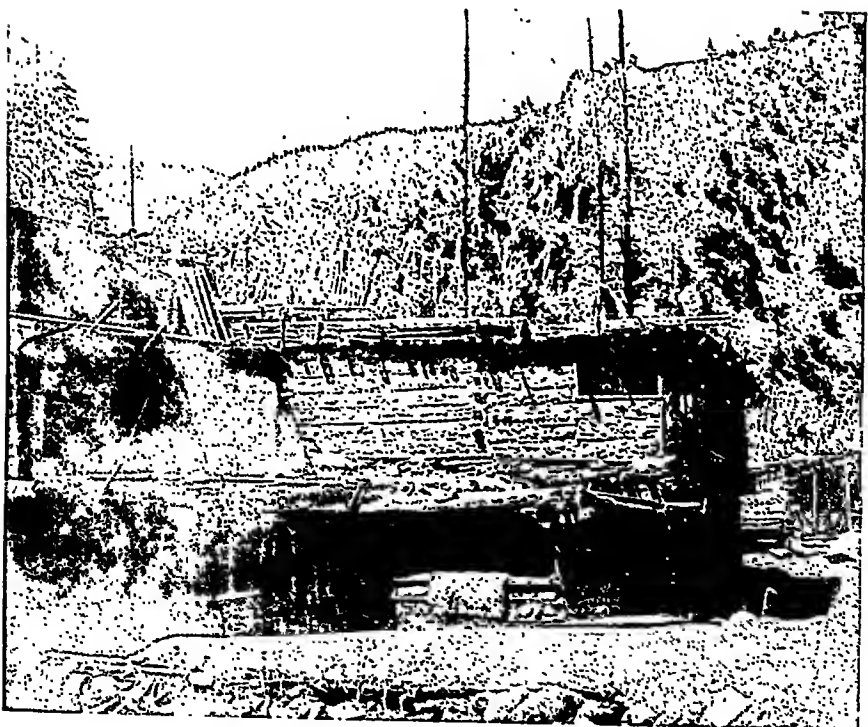
Kalash Kafir settlement in the Bimboret Valley. The road was almost as bad as it could be, and I very soon sent my pony back; higher up the road eased off, and the upper parts of the valley were very pleasant, with grass and magnificent walnut trees. The desolation of the Hindu Koosh is left behind in these valleys, for at about 6000 feet one enters a belt of deodar forest. The western end of Chitral, indeed, is noted for its deodars, and great quantities were exported by the late Amir, it being a fruitful source of income, as the labour was forced and cost nothing. It was simply a matter of turning wood into money; and as any form of preservation or of safeguarding the forests was certainly disregarded, it can easily be imagined what harm was done the country by this trade.

We had both of us a most weird trip. The country is very fine; the mountain scenery in itself is quite ordinary, which means that it is not very beautiful though it must be large, but it has quite good forests, the trees often being of most imposing size. However ugly the shapes, deodars alone often take an ugly country quite out of the commonplace.

We passed through many Kalash Kafir villages, and occasionally saw their idols. The weird wooden figures on horseback, many of which one



KAFIR EFFIGIES OVER GRAVES.



KAFIR VILLAGE, BIMBORET.

sees where the true Kafir lives, are, I believe, not made or erected by the slave tribes, but are purely grave monuments in memory of prominent men belonging to free Kafir tribes. At Bimboret village we stayed a couple of days. We had dances, etc., but nothing very interesting.

The women were generally ungainly and very dirty, and the general deportment of the people was quite slave-like; they were of a low type—beasts of burden. There is nothing attractive about the Kalash. The Kafir of Kafiristan, on the other hand, is a wild primitive person worthy of real interest. He has always been completely independent, and carries himself as such. Most of them are wonderfully graceful. Many may have a degraded type of head, or would it be better, possibly, to say unevoluted? I personally incline to call it a degraded one, as I think the type is worn out and must go. But many also walk and move most wonderfully. Nothing is so striking as a typical Kafir walking cheerfully along on his own business; there is a spring and a swing in his movements that I have never seen in any other race whatsoever. There were some few in the Bimboret Valley when we were there, and also in the neighbouring valley that we crossed over to—the Birir. They evidently looked down on the Kalash almost as much as the Chitralis them-

selves did. There were so few, however, that we could not really, as we were situated, learn much about them; all we were able to learn at that time came from Robertson himself, the only real authority, and some half-dozen Kafirs who had accompanied him for a tour in India, and had come to Chitral to see him.

It was not until my next visit that I was able really to learn anything, and that was but little; still, I found the opportunity of visiting several of their villages, and took part also in certain festivals, seeing many of their real old dances and archery competitions. Ghulam Dastgir did what he could to show us sport, and we went out two or three times after markhor without success, both on our trip and afterwards from his fort near Gairat.

Although we had so little time I am inclined to doubt the real desire to show us game, as I have since learnt practically that much of the ground that we went over held quite a good show of markhor and oorial, and that probably, although we were hurried, the Mehtar-jhao could have got us each a shot if he had wanted to. We stayed a couple of nights at his fort, and were much interested in his markhor trophies which were put up on the walls all round the fort, some of them evidently being quite good heads. Many

markhor have been killed in the valleys we went to since that date.

From a hill-side high up above Gairat we were able to see the fort of Drosh, in Chitral territory, now, since the death of the old Melhtar, in the hands of Umra Khan of Jandol and his Pathans. Umra Khan was a Bajouri Pathan, and a real adventurer: and, for a Pathan, a very fine character. He had risen from almost nothing to a very strong position, and, at this time, was probably the most powerful and certainly the most able of any of the Pathan chiefs in the independent Pathan country between the Peshawar district and the Afghan and Chitral border. It is really remarkable how extraordinarily few murders he had committed during his rise to power. He never had a real thirst for blood, and afterwards behaved very well to the two British officers, Fowler and Edwards, who fell into his hands during the Chitral War.

Shortly after our return to Chitral, things were livened up a bit by the murder of our chief supporter among the Maulai community. The weather had begun to get hot, and we were sleeping out on the roof of our house, when a shot went off quite close to us. Robertson woke up and quietly remarked, "I suppose they have shot the Pir," then turned over and went to sleep

again. Considering, at the time, that he was rather inclined to think that the safety of the mission depended to a great extent on this individual, I consider that being able immediately to go to sleep again showed remarkable steadfastness of mind. We were also warned that a fanatical Mohammedan fakir or saint had despatched pupils from Pathan land to kill any of the mission that they could ; but nothing came of this, it may not even have been true, though there is nothing remarkable in such a line of action.

The whole of the trade with the Panjab at this time was in the hands of the Khaka Kheyl Pathan traders. These men appear to pass everywhere unmolested ; many of them, too, have travelled far afield and were very interesting to meet. I made attempts to get their headman, one Hadji Mian, to take me down to India with him through the almost unknown Dir and Bajour country, but it was considered too dangerous ; and Hadji Mian, though he said he thought he could have managed it, allowed that it was a risky undertaking. The road has now of course, since the Chitral War, been properly established and even guarded on our behalf by the people themselves.

Mountaineering was almost out of the question—that is, serious mountaineering. Chitral is a

country of terrific mountains, and of terrific precipices into the bargain. The ordinary valleys are full of difficulties, and following game takes one into just as hard country as one can go over, but to the ordinary heights there is very often an easy way. There are, of course, plenty of points, quite ordinary ones, which will anyhow provide plenty of work before getting there; but when once one gets to the great mountains, well, they present just the same difficulties as the Hindu Koosh right through.

Behind Chitral, and due north of it, is a ridge tipped with limestone, and on it were some very exciting points. First and foremost, they were within reach, and we should not have to go far; secondly, they evidently commanded a magnificent view; and thirdly, to reach them apparently, one would have to climb pretty hard but pretty safely. The rock was very steep, though good, as I discovered on a long day of exploration, mounting from Chitral itself. Younghusband was as anxious as I was to get there. So we organised a little expedition about the middle of May.

The Ispero Zom is the name of a ridge, and means the White Cliffs; not that they are particularly white, but they are white by contrast with their surroundings.

Our expedition, exclusive of our Chitrali guard,

consisted of Karbir and Raghubir, Younghusband, and myself. On this occasion we were allowed to camp out, as the actual walking distance from Chitral was considerable; and as there was a great deal of winter snow left, which after mid-day got into a very bad state, certain places would have been actually dangerous to negotiate. As it was we had some flat bits of snow, which gave a great deal of trouble, the snow getting too soft to support the body, even when crawling over it. We had had some hours of this on our first exploring expedition, so we now hoped to be able to avoid most of it. Boots had to be taken care of, I myself had only one pair of well-worn boots left, so we all donned the Chitrali "tao-ching," strips of untanned goat and markhor hide wrapped round the feet and ankles, and secured by a thong in exactly the same way as in the Gilgit district. I, having tender feet, hate them, though some people, for dry rocks, prefer them even to the Kashmiri grass shoe. The people of the country wear them on all ground, and in snow keep their feet warm with excellently made woollen stockings and woven goat's-hair wrappings. We had a very pleasant day and a gorgeous view, especially of the Buni peaks.

We did not get such a good view of Tirich Mir, as there were too many intervening points, but

the view of the Buni peaks and the range south of Chitral was quite worth the trouble we had taken to get there, even including the subsequent floundering in soft snow.

In June, things having settled down in Chitral, Younghusband was left behind with the Sikh guard as British representative, and Robertson returned to Gilgit, taking me with him. But what a different journey! For the valleys are very hot in June, there is next door to no shade, and the sun heat is very great. Our camps were generally pleasant. They were always in villages, and the Chitrali village in June is quite shady.

As in the other parts of the Hindu Koosh, wherever water can be brought almost anything can be grown; so we nearly always camped on delightful grass and under the shade of fruit trees. We returned by the right bank of the river, and therefore had to cross the Chitral river at Mastuj, now no longer a clear and fairly shallow stream, but swollen by melting snow into a great river. It opens out at Mastuj a great deal, and with the help of local experts we got across without much difficulty.

The ride over the Shandur was delightful, and a nice change; in winter we had marched straight across the middle of the uplands, and over what we now found to be a considerable mountain lake.

We got back to Gilgit without trouble or incident of any sort, and I shortly left for Hunza.

I did not see Chitral again for nearly eleven years, when all was different. The country had been under British supervision for nine years. No longer was the road to the Panjab an unexplored country, for a road had been constructed many years, bridges had been built, the name of Umra Khan was still, and rightly so, remembered by the Pathans, but he himself had died, in everything but name a prisoner in Kabul. His fort at Drosh had been turned into a store for the Commissariat Department, and Drosh and Chitral were dominated by a British garrison at the two new forts which bear their names. Further, the Kafirs of the different Kafiristan valleys had all been conquered by Abdurrahman, and forcibly converted to Moham-medanism, some tribes, such as the Ramgol Kafirs, migrating entirely to another part of Afghanistan, while the only Kafirs who remained in the exercise of their ancient beliefs had all come over the border into Chitral territory. They are now established at the heads of nearly all the valleys, formerly only inhabited by the Kalash tribes, as well as on the upper stretches on the way to the Dorah, where indeed there had been a few houses of Virron Kafirs when I visited the Dorah with the Chitral mission. It was most interesting to see

the country. The people had quite settled down and were quite friendly, but I am doubtful whether they are not forgetting that a very few years ago they used to be sold into slavery by their old rulers. Security often brings forgetfulness with it.

However, speaking generally, at the present time the people are quite contented. I doubt very much whether as much can be said for the Adamzada class, before mentioned. Their chief amusements in life, continual intrigue and subsequent slaughtering, and the like, are no longer possible; though there is some outlet for their energies in the irregular regiment of Chitralis that has been formed for use on the frontier. Some day or other this corps ought to turn out of some use; I believe it has nearly every military virtue except the military spirit.

For an irregular corps they are very well trained and are excellent shots, they are very hardy and active, and first-rate mountaineers, but generations of oppression must leave its mark, and although I believe the inhabitants of the upper valleys are fine fellows, the lower Chitrali is not a fighting man. They should, if needed, do wonderfully useful service on their own northern frontier, watching the passes and so on in conjunction with the regular garrison. It will be very interesting to see how their development goes on.

Men possessed of such excellent physical qualities may, before another generation has grown up, be able to strengthen their moral fibre. At any rate, I can say that they are very nice people to travel about with, nearly always cheerful, and ready to sing or dance,—in fact they do this latter a little too often, to the detriment of sleep.

The opening up of the Pathan country, lying between the Panjab frontier and the Chitral frontier, has brought Chitral within fairly easy reach of India. The wild country through which the road passes is still not directly under the British Government, but is to a great extent controlled by the British political officers in charge of these districts. It is still unsafe to travel the road without an escort. But this escort is formed usually entirely of the local levies, which are kept up by the Khan of Dir with the assistance of the British Government. The garrison in Chitral is changed every year, and the relieving regiment is obliged to take with it rations for the following year, and often many other stores as well. The consequence is that the baggage-train is of very great length, especially as the road, after leaving the outpost of Chakdara, one short march across the frontier, is only broad enough to allow of mules in single file.

In order to safeguard this great line of impedi-

menta a column is formed to march to assist the relieving garrison and to help out the relieved, and another flying column is organised at the Chakdara outpost ready to reinforce in case of necessity arising. Up to the present time there has never been any necessity, but in case of another Pathan rising undoubtedly this is a vulnerable spot, and would offer a great temptation to the tribes.

A very easy pass leads into actual Chitral territory, namely, the Lowarai. The ascent on the southern side is very gradual, but the descending zigzags are steep for a long train of animals, and, as occasionally happens, if there should be an early fall of snow, quite difficult. In winter the descent, though not difficult, is very exposed to avalanches, the overhanging heights being very steep, and snow falling from them sweeps nearly the whole of the upper part of the road. The descent is very fine, through a really beautiful forest; a most welcome change after the bare hot hill-sides and shadeless road of the southern side. But one soon emerges from the forest, and as soon as the main valley of the Chitral river is reached one is in typical Chitral scenery.

Lower Chitral is interesting if one does not know it well, but the scenery of this part of the valley, though large, is not impressive. The mountain formation is ugly to a degree. Almost

the only vegetation in sight is scrub oak, a mean but useful tree. At this time of the year it is also hot and dusty in the middle of the day. Even the scale is not very impressive—I think the least impressive of all the ugly scenes of the Hindu Koosh that I have met. It has its compensations though; it is a fine sporting country. All the neighbouring valleys on the north bank used to hold great numbers of markhor; and though now I am told that good heads have greatly decreased, there is still sport enough to be obtained.

The military headquarters of Chitral are at the fort of Drosh, some three and a half marches from the top of the Lowarai, and, considering the country, very comfortable quarters too. A year in Chitral, although almost cut off from civilisation, is quite a pleasant experience. The garrison duty is light, and the sportsman and wanderer generally get plenty of opportunity. There is probably no garrison in the world where all forms of mountain sport can be so easily and cheaply obtained. Though long leave is difficult to be obtained, circumstances allow of one's being absent frequently for short periods. I only regret that during the whole year I was there I was unable to do any serious mountaineering, but that, after all, is a very small regret, and would probably have meant sacrificing a good many other forms.

of sport and wanderings. I was luckily able to revisit the Kafir settlements on several occasions, and to make one interesting, though short, glacier expedition, the rest of my leisure being given up to shooting.

The Chitral winter is most enjoyable. It is, of course, cold, but it is also the season of sport and of leave. The Chitral markhor in the spring either retires altogether across the border to Kafiristan, or lies up in the great forests on the borderland, and is not worth while going after until September. Ibex, which are obtainable on the main chain and far back, are too far away for a short leave; and as soon as the real heat arrives the garrison is split up as much as possible and sent to different high camps, and in consequence leave is more difficult to obtain. With winter also comes the chickore shooting. The chickore is a red-legged partridge, very like the European variety, but larger. He affords most excellent sport, is a very strong flier, and when, as on the Chitral hill-sides, one is able to drive him well, gives some of the most difficult shooting one could wish to have. There are also a sufficient number of them to keep one busy all day. As soon as the snow falls heavily at the higher levels the chickore begin to move down, but usually not until Christmas in any great quantities; from that

time until March, however, good sport can always be obtained; and I think then that it is the best afforded by Chitral at all.

As I said, during the winter I had several opportunities of visiting the Kafir settlements, and was lucky enough at the village of Bimboret, which I before mentioned, to be present at the annual shooting contest. All the village turned out and shot at peeled willow wands placed about eighty yards distant. Some of the shooting was quite good, but the bow itself is very inferior, and the arrow very primitive. It is made out of reed with a crude triangular iron point roughly fashioned and lashed into the reed. It has no feather at the bow end to direct it, and is altogether a very inferior production.

We also came in for one of the great ceremonial dances and sacrifices. For a consideration, such as a couple of goats presented to the village, the Kafirs would at any time get up a dance for one, but this occasion was a feast day. Kafir villages are nearly always built on the side of steep hills, and their dancing platforms are very cleverly built out from them. The uprights and timbers employed have to be of great thickness, and the planks which form the flooring have to be of sufficient strength to stand forty or fifty men dancing together. They have the weirdest

dancing costumes, and usually a kind of plume of the feather of the monal pheasant in their head-dress. Each man carries also a ceremonial axe, intended for dancing with only.

There is also a sacrificial altar, with the presiding priest, on which are placed different kinds of grain and twigs of the sacred juniper. The invocation delivered by the priest with uplifted hands, beseeching the gods to accept the sacrifice—usually a calf—is most weird and old-world. One feels carried away to the back of beyond. The character of the dancing that follows the sacrifice, the tunes played on the thin reed pipes, the torches, and the quaint appearance of the dancers, add immensely to this feeling. One quite feels that *Puck of Pook's Hill* is a serious work, and that one is actually back among primitive man. I felt a desperate desire to join in; especially in the more light-hearted dances that followed, in which every one joined, and sang choruses, and one could really have let oneself go. The little reed pipes also produced something which distinctly resembled a tune, and were much more attractive than the horrible form of Panjab music.

At the same time the Kafir is an unreclaimed savage and will always remain so; his mind is far more primitive and, so to speak, away back than that of any Chitrali or Pathan whatsoever. He

is an ancient man, a man of a lost period, a relic. In his savagery one cannot compare him to the savage tribes on the eastern frontier of India, such as the Nagas and Lushais—they are a very modern product in comparison. The Kafir is intensely ancient, and the first references we have to him in ancient times point to him even then as being considered an interesting if formidable savage.

From east to west runs a very striking valley, the valley of the Shishi river, which joins the Chitral river some five miles above Drosh. It is an easy valley to travel, and its upper reaches open out considerably. It is, for Chitral, wooded, and, comparatively speaking, grassy, but it is Dauphiné, not Switzerland. Speaking truthfully, it is a stony waste, flanked by fine mountains and precipitous glens holding, in many cases, really good forests, but the head of the valley is real Dauphiné, a certain or rather a very uncertain amount of grass, and really beautiful peaks.

Near the head of this valley for several years has been formed the summer camp of the Chitral garrison. I spent an all too short month there, and rather early in the season from my point of view. As usual in a deep valley, although there is considerable valley space, one does not see or realise the mountain value. But from a little



KAFIR.



GOKÁN PEAKS.

above, where our camp at Maderglasht was established, the mountain scenery is superb. The Gokan aiguilles can bear comparison with almost anything in Chitral. Actually they are matched a thousand times over, but here their situation lets them get the full value of their beauty. I saw no possible way of attacking them. This, no doubt, is an idiotic statement : witness all the old accounts of the Matterhorn, now looked on in good weather as an easy climb : witness also, and more to the point, the numerous Chamounix aiguilles. Still, it is a most formidable proposition, and would at any rate require a prolonged reconnaissance on all sides. Of the other faces, namely, the western and all the southern, I am not able to speak, neither is any one else, for, as far as I am aware, no one has ever seen them.

The eastern face I have viewed, and that is quite and absolutely hopeless. Farther beyond these beautiful aiguilles lies the whole mass of the Buni peaks, the most formidable kind of mountain structure. The whole southern faces of these mountains and their valleys are unknown to Europeans, no one at all has explored them ; in fact, from the Chitral road, as far as the confine of Ghor, in the Gilgit agency, lies a country unvisited by the white man, and a country of great interest to the wanderer, though politically

all that is necessary to know about it is already known.

Many natives, either belonging to the Indian Survey or men belonging to Indian regiments, have traversed and reported on it, and many of its inhabitants are in communication with British political officers. It is not a friendly country. I'm afraid that no non-Mohammedan would be received in a friendly way, at any rate in the western part of it. Amongst the more easterly Shins, where there is less fanaticism, he would have a better chance.

There is very probably fine markhor shooting to be obtained. If there are any keen shikaris among the Young Turks, let me recommend this tract to them, as one of the few places where Englishmen, at any rate, are unable to go.

To the east of the Gokan peaks lies a pass, the Andoowir Pass, leading down to the head of the Panjkora river tributaries—to exactly where I cannot say, and I am doubtful if any one has been to see. Our camp at Maderglasht was very anxious to explore it; so one holiday two rope-loads of us set off in really gorgeous weather.

This pass is of no possible difficulty, though it was easier for us then, being earlier in the year, than it might have been later on, and there was a great amount of snow. The snow and ice scenery

was very fine, and the flanking mountain sides most impressive. I imagine the height to be about 16,000 feet, more or less, a matter of very little importance. What mattered to me on that particular day was the way my rope-load behaved. I was in quite good training, and leading; my No. 2 complained of having to pull up No. 3, a Goorkha, who developed mountain sickness, more I think owing to the awful heat of the sun on that day than to anything else. I noticed that I was being treated like a traction engine, and was pretty done up on arrival. No. 2's complaints continued; but on arrival, when I was getting out the lunch, No. 2 himself collapsed, and was very, very ill. I then discovered that I had been pulling two very sick men, and not assisting No. 2 to pull one.

That day any one might have suffered. The day was cloudless, and the heat and glare awful, the worst I ever experienced, not even excepting our day in the Bagini Pass in Garhwal. I was wearing a paggri, and wrapped it round my face, but notwithstanding that, my face, hardened though it previously had been, did not recover for some days after.

This, the most westerly piece of new ground on which I have ventured, may well finish these wanderings.

There is one great piece of mountain explora-

tion to be done in Chitral, the Tirich Mir group. No one knows its upper glaciers or has ventured on them. The neighbouring passes, on the east the Sad Istragh, on the west the Agram, have frequently been crossed by English officers. But of the Tirich Mir group itself little is known. It is the abode of the fairies. They swarm here; they are frequently blood relations of well-born Chitrali families; so they have some human weaknesses. The Chitrali himself does not like facing them, so, good man as he is, probably the best results would be obtained by bringing in outsiders.

Thus ends my series of wanderings up to the present date; they have been made possible, as far as climbing is concerned, when I have not had expert European assistance, by many different kinds of natives of the Himalaya and Hindu Koosh, to whom my best thanks are due, but chiefly to the men of my own regiment, without whose assistance I could have accomplished very little, and to whom the thanks of many of the other explorers of the Himalaya are due. The success of nearly every climb, as I said before, is due to them, for I am not a skilful mountaineer, I never have been, and now never shall be; and though I may have been able to direct, the success of nearly every expedition rests with them.

I hope there is still a wandering future in store

own for me and for them. As all my old companions are professional men, their services are seldom to be counted on, but the number of others who have the same natural qualifications is immense; and, further, outside military technique, there is no such training for a soldier as a difficult mountaineering expedition.

CHAPTER XI

CAMP LIFE FROM A LADY'S POINT OF VIEW

By the Hon. Mrs. BRUCE

CAMP life in India may, broadly speaking, be divided into two kinds, camping in the plains and camping in the hills; and very great are the contrasts between these two methods of open-air life. The average man in the street when he hears of camp life in India probably pictures to himself the camp *de luxe* of the civilian who moves about the plains with a double set of tents, a retinue of camels, endless servants, and easy marching on elephants. Such camp life has been well described in scores of books and by scores of globe-trotters, and is by no means lacking in pleasure. Camp life in the hills, though necessarily on a smaller and less magnificent scale, has also been described in scores of books by sportsmen and travellers, but possibly not so often from the woman's point of view. It has been my good fortune to sample camp life under varying conditions and in various parts of India, and though I

consider the plains camping to be infinitely more comfortable and easier in every way, I have no hesitation in saying that, to my mind, it can in no way touch hill camping for pleasure or beauty.

The conditions of Himalayan travelling to-day are very much what they were in the Alps a hundred years ago, only without the inns. Here and there on main roads one may find military works bungalows, but never once off the beaten track. In Europe, one's object is to elude other tourists. In India, being such rare birds, one is always delighted to meet and make much of any stranger. For the comfort of women travellers in the Himalaya be it said they are very safe, for the hills are untouched by the "unrest," as it is called—the ignorance and insubordination, as it might better be described—of certain factions in Bengal and elsewhere. The quiet hill-folk are perfectly contented and friendly. Having known peace for generations now, and being protected from raiders, they live and let live, and as a rule are most friendly. Even their occasional—very occasional—unfriendliness turns merely on whether they wish or not to sell their sheep and fowls to one, or take the trouble of sending milk half a mile. Far more often they will bring one presents of fruit—possibly the whole season's crop off the one small tree in their plot of ground—or a cheese, or walnuts.

So it is, in most parts, quite comfortable for ladies to travel in the hills. It is wiser as well as more cheery if there are two, as accidents may occur, in which case it is unpleasant for a woman to be alone, but I have repeatedly marched for days alone, and camped for days alone both in Kashmir and Suru as well as in the Kaghan Valley, and have never met with any unpleasantness, even in the days when I had not such knowledge of the language as I now possess. Nevertheless, I should advise any one going to India to try and make a beginning at learning Urdu, for without it one is naturally cut off from any personal touch with the natives, as well as at the mercy of any who may be troublesome.

The far-a-field traveller in the Himalaya should, it goes without saying, be in good health and must be a good walker. Still, it is quite possible to make expeditions in the hills of a less ambitious nature on pony-back, or carried in that singularly uncomfortable vehicle, a "dandy."

The pleasures of camp life of every description certainly start on a common basis; the first experience of sleeping in a tent, whether in hills or plains, is a unique one. But to get back, even in a measure, to the wild, I think one must taste the simpler delights of Himalayan travelling. Then one really feels the immensity of Nature, for when

and to gaze down at the valleys from which lately one lifted aspiring eyes, and in which the river now shrinks to a silver ribbon, is a great moment in one's life. It breathes of conquest over difficulty, of personal achievement and reward such as one can never know in the beaten track of ordinary touring.

One of my first nights in camp was, so to speak, like *Hamlet* without the Prince, for we had no tents, being belated on an unknown road, and after stumbling along in the dark, up and down a stony path above a raging booming torrent of a river, we elected to spend the night, a still and starry one, in a field. What led to our doing this was not the inability to make our destination four miles further on, where our dinner and beds awaited us, but that my husband and his pony—luckily, he was not riding at the time—had both, owing to the dark-

ness, gone over the hill-side. Most fortunately he himself was able to regain the path, and she landed in the only safe place just about there, and neither of them sustained any injury, but it was not worth risking another fall, so we halted. Some friendly villagers brought out milk and chupatties, which I only cared just to taste, I'm afraid, and a couple of *charpois* (wooden bedsteads), on which our rugs were spread, and there we slept.

I shall never forget it, for I think it was the first time I realised what an Indian starlit sky could be in a brilliant cloudless night in May. Such skies are impossible in Europe. It was literally as if the great deep azure dome had been thickly strewn with large diamonds, and powdered with diamond dust, or as if one was gazing through a thin veil at some untold brilliance which it barely concealed. The sky sparkled and palpitated with life and mystery. And yet, with all its multitudinous worlds, there was the personal touch too, for those same constellations and planets were hung above home and kindred, and with the touch of night's magic silver wand distance and parting no longer existed. Such a night as this reigns supreme among memories of many hours spent under the stars. The first night in a tent is somehow a little more lonely and less wonderful. One has a certain amount of ordinary bedroom com-

forts, a book and lantern, but one is hedged in, on three sides anyhow, by the tent, whereas out in the open one throws oneself into Nature's arms and protection. Still, a tent is delightful, and one flings care to the winds which rustle through its canvas walls, and Time is a moveable feast.

All this, however, is fancy free, and gives no idea of the practical side of hill camp life, a very important side. To start on a hill trip without some practical knowledge and preparation leads to far more discomfort in the hills than it would in the plains. To begin with, proper equipment is far more essential. Strong, easy, well-made and nailed boots are, I almost think, of the first importance. How can any march be prosperous or happy without good foot-gear? Boots should never be worn for the first time on a long walk, or blisters and foot-soreness will be the result. Two or more pairs should also be taken for obvious reasons, and very comfortable old ones to wear in camp. There is no need for the average woman pedestrian to wear bloomers or even extravagantly short skirts. A neatly cut skirt which clears the ankles (stockingette knickers replacing petticoats) is perfectly comfortable. In case climbing of any sort is contemplated, buttons and loops to pick up the skirt front and back, for going up and down hills, is an advantage.

Clothing in all hills is much the same, whether in Europe or Asia, but in the latter the greater strength of the sun must not be forgotten. Woollen coats and skirts, thick and thin, are far preferable to drill or cotton, as nowadays one has a wide range of choice. Silk shirts are perhaps best, except for high altitudes (as one gets hot walking up and down hills), and one should never be without a woollen coat, thick or thin according to the altitude and season, to guard against sudden chills. A plain straw hat, a stitched tweed one, and a pith helmet should all be taken, and worn, according to the power of the sun. Loose chamois leather gloves and a sturdy (not too long) stick, and in the rainy season a man's mackintosh cape to reach below the knees; I say advisedly a man's mackintosh, for when rain comes down in the hills it comes down in earnest, and lady-like shower-proof garments are useless. Cameras are generally carried on all expeditions, and very often given to the coolie who bears the ubiquitous "tiffin" basket, coats, and rug. From this coolie one must never be parted. Lose sight of him for a mile even, and you may go hungry for hours.

It is not as easy as it might seem to lay down rules as to what should or should not be taken into camp, at any rate hard-and-fast rules, but there are a few which should always be observed.

The happy medium, of course, must be aimed at, neither too little nor extraneous food, clothing, or etceteras. A warm wrap and rug, a pair of snow-boots well goloshed are imperative, also india-rubber hot-water bottles. Large mosquito-nets are a nuisance, and may not be needed in the hills, but it is a wise precaution to have a small bell-shaped tent of net two yards long, with a few shot run into the hem, and a long double string attached to the centre, which can be tied above one's head to the tent-roof. This, if the feet are covered, is quite a good protection, for one may sometimes meet with mosquitoes, when camping near rice fields, or crossing a low valley or lake, while on the march, as we did in one instance, when a very serious illness resulted from mosquito blood-poisoning. A small supply of medicines for emergencies, such as chlorodyne, brandy, quinine, castor oil, etc., bandages, lint, and concentrated antiseptic lotion, is indispensable, not always for oneself, for one is generally in the rudest of health while camping, but so often for the relief of villagers, who quickly hear of a Sahib's passing along, and as quickly solicit help, for they never have a chance of a doctor's. A certain amount of practical knowledge in medicine and nursing is of the greatest use, also of cooking. The best of servants may fall ill, and it is always wise for a mistress to have a

working knowledge of that which is involved in her own orders. Indian servants are a wonder in camp. As a rule they really shine under conditions which would paralyse an English cook, either with rage or despair. Boiling a kettle (to say nothing further) gipsy fashion is great fun in fine weather, but try and do it with wet wood in a snow-storm, or after two days and nights of consecutive rain, or at the end of a long and arduous march. And yet tea is produced at 6 A.M., and all meals from that on without a grumble, and well-cooked meals too.

Humanity and sympathy towards these servants and to the porters or "coolies" pays, even from low motives. But how infinitely more enjoyable is the trip—which, after all, is no pleasure, but an inexplicable enigma to native servants—when one realises that they have feelings too. Hence any servants taken up into the hills should have a warm coat to the knees, a woollen waistcoat and putties, and a thick blanket. There is then no need to worry over them, and they are warm and content.

Such children in their simplicity are these servants too. They, like many people, love a new coat, and when these are served out prior to starting on an expedition, probably on a hot May day at the base of the hills, they will at once put them on and button them tight up to the throat. This childish display of pride and pleasure may be

indulged for an hour, but the coats should then be stored till really required, or allowed to be worn only early morning and evening, when the temperature generally drops considerably.

Boxes are another serious item for consideration. English-made suit-cases or portmanteaus should be left at home ; small boxes of light canvas are the best, with absolutely water-tight valises for bedding. A large camp bath is best ; the small ones are almost worse than none. Plenty of bedding, too, must be taken ; there is nothing more wretched than to be cold in camp. A hot-water bottle or two, and stockingette sheets, with a couple of pair of linen ones for hot marches, are best and safest. On an expedition lasting more than three weeks, a Dhobi or washer-man is almost indispensable. These little luxuries are usually kittle cattle to deal with in camp. Mysterious letters are apt to arrive by unexpected posts or by a heated messenger, purporting to bring a summons to the death-bed of some relative ; or else some sudden and mysterious attack of illness, only (so they say) to be alleviated by an immediate return to their homes, overtakes the servant on whom, especially in a woman's case, so much comfort depends. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, and before starting a compact should be made that all relatives must postpone their departure from this vale of tears to a convenient

season (this is not so cruel as it sounds, for these sudden deaths are usually followed by a wonderful resurrection on one's return home), while no one should be taken on the march who is not in good health. But here, again, a good Dhobi is a marvel, for he will wash, dry, and iron almost as well on a flat rock or the ground as in his well-appointed laundry at home.

The commissariat of an expedition is the main-spring of its success, and though plain living conduces to high thinking, a few little luxuries to be produced on wet or disappointing days will often cheer one on. A selection of "relishes" to one's tea or supper, a few tins of fruit, etc., are well worth half or even a whole extra coolie. The supply of local provisions differs, of course, in various places, and reliable information should be collected before starting. As a rule, the necessities are forthcoming, but rice, barley, potatoes, onions, sugar, raisins, and a sack of flour should be taken, the latter with a *waterproof* outer covering. Very good brown bread can be made with half-quantities of ordinary *ata* or wholemeal, and should be baked every other day. With a simple camp oven excellent bread may be baked, and scones and buns at any moment without an oven. Of course, aluminium cooking-pots are an advantage where every pound weight tells. That every woman

should be able to cook at a pinch is an accepted ideal; it is necessary that it should be more than an ideal in camp, for the cook may fall sick. A very small repertoire is required, but the eye and hands should be practised in a knowledge of ounces and pounds without the help of scales and weights. For stores,—tea, jam, potted meat, and biscuits are the bulwarks of a woman's "tiffin" basket. Eggs, milk, and hill chickens—of too recent activity to be inviting joints—and occasionally mutton, can be obtained in the villages scattered about; and as many etceteras may be included as one's purse allows. In camp, however, half the good one gathers daily is furnished by a simple diet, and a dinner of Scotch barley broth, in sufficient quantity, makes a capital night-cap, for early marching means early bed, and late dinners are unknown, or at all events unwise.

Some one once wondered how rabbits got along, they "had so few resources." In camp one must go a little further than rabbits: one needs many resources, unless tents are struck every day of the expedition. A camp book-box should always be taken, with well-chosen volumes. However much one may enjoy "talks with Nature," talks with authors, grave as well as gay, solid and light, are nowhere more keenly appreciated than in camp. Photographic and sketching materials,

knitting, and even patience cards are all worth taking, with a liberal supply of writing-paper, and a *reliable* fountain pen (does one exist?). One probably takes too much, but it is, if within the limit of weight allowed, a fault on the safe side. Three or even more consecutive wet days are a strain and require relays of resources.

Never shall I forget one (my first) expedition into the hills, before I realised that the beauty of nature could possibly pall on one, or time hang heavy on one's hands out in camp. I had to be left alone, as our store of flour was running low—there were several souls to feed besides ourselves, and Goorkha orderlies and servants and dogs consume plenty of flour daily. Not liking to confess to nervousness at being left, as there was no reason for fears, I cheerfully agreed that I should be all right; for though we had finished our small store of books, I had sent for more to our station some eighty miles off, and the coolie was bound to arrive within two days. How eagerly I watched the crest of the hill may be imagined. I used to walk with the dogs, botanise in an amateur way, write letters, make rock cakes, sew, knit, and think, but those two days were long indeed, with bad weather thrown in.

On the evening of the third day the longed-for coolie arrived, perspiring, and diffusing what might

be described as *esprit de corps* at my tent-door as he slowly unknotted his blanket, which contained a hopeful lumpy load. A bag of sugar came first—useful perhaps, but at that moment not indispensable, we still had sugar; two tins of cocoa for wet and lonely nights—a cup of steaming cocoa and a new book would be cheering “of an evening”; a parcel and a letter for the Dhobi (probably his mother was dying, which, being interpreted, would mean he was bored); a pair of shoes for the cook; and a small newspaper parcel containing one postcard and one bill. This was the sum total for which I had watched and waited, and for which I had to pay three shillings portorage. But where were the books, the week’s newspapers, the English mail? Conspicuously absent. I could say but little in Hindustani in those days. I thought the more in English. I nearly cried.

There was no hope for another ten days. The coolie would have to be sent back, and so I was sadly reduced to wiping off the last vestige of long-owed correspondence. I wrote to people I never write to as a rule. I started a diary, destined to live and flourish for ten days. I painted my first and my last sketch in oils which wouldn’t dry, and at last was reduced to painting in water-colours the interior of my new bungalow, room

by room, even my bedroom, to send home to my people. I had but been in India six months, and I felt, by the time my husband returned, as if I were dead to the world. Kingdoms might have risen and fallen, for all I knew. It was an experience certainly, but not one to be repeated.

I have described it to the bitter end, so that intending girl travellers should be warned, and yet, I think, were the same conditions to occur again I should not feel them so acutely. As one grows older, times of silence are no longer irksome as in one's young days; they have indeed become necessary to one, and in the silent forests or mountain sides, if one sits and listens, a little gold key turns in the door that was once shut, and as it opens, treasures are brought to view which banish boredom and teach lessons and reveal joys before unknown, or heedlessly passed by in the stress and rush of modern life.

For this reason alone, camping in the hills spells new life and new health, for new raw material is served out with a generous hand from the silence stores, which one may work up into new tissue, physical, and mental, and spiritual.

Some people can write a diary and keep it faithfully; to others it is a physical impossibility. I am unfortunately among the latter. There is to me a great fascination in a fair new book bearing

the legend "Diary"; there is a great humiliation in an old diary with perhaps half-a-dozen records. It is such a confession of weakness, and yet, after all, a diary is often a dull thing to read. Perhaps because it has no distance, no perspective. Everything recorded is too near; and events which matter and don't matter, which deserve to live and are not worthy of remembrance, are ranged in equal lines. Looking back, if one has a good memory, is far more satisfactory. It gives better proportion and colour, more light and shade.

A far better recording angel than a diary is a camera, for it brings back in a flash pictures as real and vivid as the day they were taken. In these days the amateur photographer is catered for almost *ad nauseam*. He is bewildered by hundreds of makes of cameras. New plates and appliances jostle each other month by month. Tabloids and daylight changing and developing are a great step beyond the old system, no doubt; but is there, I wonder, as keen a pleasure with photography made easy as there was when one struggled with the old-fashioned dark slides and made up developers by the grain and drachm with weights and scales? I very much doubt it. It really was a feat to change plates sitting on a glacier, wrapped up, camera and all, in a red blanket off one's camp bed, and later to use the

same medium spread over a camp table and made light-tight with heavy stones placed outside all round, while one crouched on be-pinned and be-needed limbs and developed on the bare ground, and held the plates afterwards to rinse in a rippling stream. There was a sense of real work and a pride and pleasure in surmounting real difficulties which never attends the same performance in a well-appointed dark room.

Films certainly are a blessing, for there are few more disheartening accidents than one I met with after all the Herculean labours just described on an expedition to Suru and Ladakh. My camera was a half-plate one, and there were several boxes of most interesting and even unique negatives. Most carefully we nursed the box containing our precious freight, and nothing happened till the last day of our return journey. Nothing happened on the bad roads (and they *were* bad) or on the passes and glaciers we crossed. No, it was reserved for an irritable mule on a good broad path to literally grind about one-third of my negatives to powder. The mule lay down suddenly and rolled heavily on the box, and though the packets of negatives were very carefully packed, when I opened them many of my lovely pictures of mountains, rivers, and flowers—and of course, with the irony of fate, some which I shall

probably never be able to get again—poured out of their boxes in glass dust. To films I raise a glass, even of the latest developer, though I prefer the old.

What one hopes is within measurable distance of attainment now is colour photography, especially for recording the lovely wild-flowers to be met with in the Himalaya. Among the joys of camp life the flowers rank almost first. They are wonderful. To come upon whole acres of tall white *Eremurus* lilies is a sight and a thrill not to be forgotten. One of the best places I know for wild-flowers is the Kaghan Valley, described in another chapter. The first few marches from our starting-point have very little in this way, though there are ferns, wild jasmine, and roses here and there, but after fifty miles of road one comes to a more temperate climate, the hot valley rises by degrees, and forests creep down the hill-sides to tempt one with their protecting shade to leave the path which winds along the river's bending course and make a detour, and it is well worth acceding to such coaxing.

Fir trees of several kinds, walnut and chestnut, and ash and maple, with hazel nut undergrowth clothe the low hills, and bright blue larkspurs, paler aconites, campanulas, columbines, monkshood, and many others star the cool grass; honey-

suckle and white clematis, montana and wild roses trail over bushes and festoon rocks; while wood violets and wild strawberries carpet other spots, and later on the woods are deep with pink and yellow balsam. Higher up still another breath of delight is drawn at the acres of white peonies as large as breakfast cups, and of a satiny texture and sweetness that seems wonderful among those rugged rocks and trees at 10,000 feet. Before reaching this gorgeous parterre, for the peonies are rather stand-off in their character, and keep the place they select strictly in the family, we had made our camp with another great clan, the dwarf iris. In every shade of blue, palest grey, deepest purple, and even white, the irises spread like lapping waves over the grass downs; here curling, there receding, and one of the most delicious moments I can recall was when I sat on the side of my camp bed, my bare feet resting in a cool carpet of irises such as Burne-Jones loved to paint and William Morris to weave in tapestry. The iris season is a generous one, from the time they push up here and there through the melting snow till they gain courage to bloom in millions. They are succeeded in July by forget-me-nots. Here again we find every shade of blue, from the lovely clear Vernalis to the deepest and darkest varieties. Yellow



PEONIES.



FOREST SCENE, BICHALA, KAGHAN.



violas and sweet violets nestle under bushes of *Viburnum* with its fragrant waxy pink and white blossoms, while foxgloves and ferns are legion.

There was a narrow side valley which wound up from our camp along the river, still packed in some parts with frozen snow, which we followed to the foot of Makra, a 13,000 hill, often a favourite picnic spot. Along this small river one found primulas of several kinds, some like mauve cowslip balls, and various pink and magenta sorts, while Alpine flora of every description abounded. Masses of anemones, blue and white, answering to every whiff of wind—how apt is the name of wind flower—golden splashes of marsh marigolds, and wild *Doronicum*. Tiny brilliant blue gentians, and a host of wee blossoms pressing tight to the bosom of the earth as if frightened by the immensity about them, and seeking the protection of short sturdy grass. Dwarf black-purple columbines and lovely edelweiss grew on the higher slopes, and were often presented to me in short stalked bunches by the Goorkhas, who not only know that I love flowers, but love them themselves, and like to tuck a gay blossom behind their ears.

One comfort in camping is that one usually takes the cream off every place, passing on before the beauty of the moment has time to tarnish. So often there are moments of disappointment and

even pain in cultivated gardens to garden lovers as they watch fallen petals and withering stalks where for so short a time brilliance and fragrance have reigned, but in a moving camp one respects Nature's privacy, leaving her alone in her sad moments of decay, promising to return another year. Camping can only be done in the Himalaya during a few months of the year, as far as pleasure-seeking goes, that is to say. There are plenty of forest and other officers who have to camp out all the year through, and for them it is not always the time of roses.

The contrasts which exist among the different hill people are quite as noticeable in the vegetable world—trees and flowers found at much the same elevation differing according to soil and climatic conditions. The Kangra Valley is one of the most interesting and beautiful to be found. About seventy-three miles of cart-road from a small hot station on the north-west railway carries one into quite charming scenery. After two days of dusty train-journeying from the North-West Frontier, once more the Himalaya pierce the horizon. At first they form a dim hazy barrier which might almost be a mass of cloud, till form and shape begin to define the star sapphire blueness, and dazzling crystal touches reveal the snows.

Kangra and Kulu are among the richest of the

Himalayan valleys. Anything and everything will grow, for the soil is fertile, rivers abound, and the climate is temperate. At first groups of palm trees and bamboos, bananas and tree ferns are picturesque touches. Then fine woods clothe the country. The hedges are prodigal with roses and jasmine, and every spring is a maiden-hair fern grotto. Flourishing villages abound, and here and there an old castle stands in an impregnable position and points to old history such as only a productive country can boast. Higher up, man is held back at arm's length by the great mountain monarchs—"so far and no farther" they say to all but the most daring of spirits.

Every five miles, with its change of ponies, brings your mail-cart farther into this most smiling valley. In March, fields of waving blue flax and linseed and stretches of rich green wheat fields surround the neat thatched or slate-roofed cottages, while pink almond and peach trees sound delicate notes of colour. Sixty miles or so from the railway is Dharmsala, a Goorkha station with its pretty bungalows. But we are not in search of civilisation; canvas roofs are at present all we are thinking of, and where they may lead one. The rhododendron forests are a sight more gorgeous than mere words can describe, and their setting in the Kangra Valley is such as

to enhance their beauty. The great wall of snows, which run up to 17,000 feet, gleams sapphire and diamond against a turquoise sky, and looking up from a platform furnished by a spur in the forest of sober ilex, the rhododendrons, giant trees as well as smaller ones, appear as if massed in crimson and rose against the very snows themselves. It is a marvellous sight.

I fully believe that Kangra and Kulu have a great future before them, and will yet prove to be a mine of wealth to India, not merely for the sake of their agricultural properties, but for the sake of their climate. A railway, even a light one, would not only carry tea and fruit to India at cheaper rates than can now be expected,—that is a very small part of the question,—but that portion of the plains of the Punjab which now lies sweltering in dancing heat from April to November, and from which it takes two days at top speed with expensive transport to reach a hill station, would be within a few hours' reach of civil and military stations, where no white woman ought to remain during the hot weather, but where many white women, and children too, live perforce from year's end to year's end, and grow white and sick as the hot weather drags wearily along. Everything is lavish in Kangra and Kulu—wood, water, and food—a second Kashmir.

On the several occasions that I have visited the valley, the people native to it were most friendly. We used to meet the Gaddis—the shepherd inhabitants—harvesting, carrying great sheaves of rice straw on their backs, and I well remember one woman who sat to rest on one of the terraces of the tea-garden; she was on her way home after gleaning rice straw when I came upon her. She smiled and looked with curiosity at my camera, and as we exchanged a few words about crops and babies I managed to take a photograph of her. Neither did she seem to object, as Indians so often do. The idea, I believe, is that it is unlucky to have a facsimile of yourself produced and invokes the glance of the evil eye.

One can almost describe the huts in which the Gaddis live as cottages; thatched or slated roofs keep all snug within. They are quite as good as Irish cabins or Scotch crofters' huts, and far better than the tenements in slums. Charming pastoral scenes of shepherds—adults and children—are constantly met with, for they graze their sheep all round about the grass-land and tea gardens of Kangra and Kulu. I can only speak at present by hearsay of the latter, but hope before long to make that lovely valley's acquaintance. The wealth of beautiful flowers to be found in the right parts of the Himalaya repays one nobly

for effort expended in their search. Very few women have either the inclination or the physical strength to become earnest mountaineers, but the majority can accomplish ordinary camp trips without aspiring to be among the world's greatest climbers. Record-breaking does not necessarily spell enjoyment, on the contrary; and even the expeditions on which I have had to "carry off the heavy baggage," in other words march with the main camp while the expert mountaineer took short cuts to the top of peaks or over them, have been full of pleasures, to say nothing of the long spells together. There is always so much to observe and enjoy, and many a long tiring day has been lightened by coming suddenly round a corner, say, on to a bank of white orchids—*Cypripedium*—with an undergrowth of the little yellow viola and wild strawberry blossoms. A new spring comes to the feet as the vibrations of colour and scent travel through one. Never shall I forget my first and only sight of the bright blue poppy. Not the lavender-grey well-known variety, but true cœrulean blue, the satiny petals, with deep golden stamens, just as vividly gold and blue as the field poppy is black and scarlet.

The first visit to any place of interest or beauty always stands as a capital letter, even if subsequent ones prove actually more enjoyable, and all who



RICE HARVESTER, KANGRA VALLEY.



WOMAN THRESHING, CENTRAL HIMALAYA.

know Kashmir will feel this especially to be the case. We went in from Murree by the "tonga" or mail-cart. The drive itself I remember with little pleasure, for I was still suffering from attacks of fever, and it needed much endurance to drive fifty and sixty miles a day, and then have to unpack and repack one's bedding. But once on the boat at Baramula rest came to the weary. The Kashmir Dungas are perhaps too well known to need description, but to my mind it was delicious to be in a camp bed screened by light rush curtains and lulled by the ripple of the placid water against the flat-bottomed punt-like boat as we were gently paddled up stream. Every now and then I would put my hand into the water and revel in its cool silky swish across my fingers.

The next morning brought us to Srinagar, well known to many who have visited that Venice of India, and to many more who care to read of the travels of others. The month was July, and naturally we had much rain, and so we determined to push on to the real objective of our trip, the Suru district, which is described in another chapter. There were some charming marches through Kashmir before us, however, and we left our boat at Ganderbal, where my pony and our baggage coolies met us. The river-banks had been full of interest to me, so many English flowers,

such as loosestrife, arrow-head, rushes, and water lilies, and many weeping willows and beautiful plane trees trimmed and shaded our course, while the Woolar Lake spread out its masses of water nuts which have quite a pretty little white flower. In the autumn these spiked nuts are gathered from their floating harvest field, and are dried and ground and used for making bread.

The Scinde Valley, up which lay our route, is most lovely. The Scinde river winds like a silver scarf throughout its length, and we followed the river. Tiny pinks carpeted many a large patch, and the huts of the villagers stood in regular orchards with stone walls, while many boasted gardens of vegetables too. We rode through miles of grass orchard country, which we were to revisit in their ripeness six weeks later. After a very wet afternoon a restful night was spent in a large shelter intended for Kashmir troops, as yet still in the hands of the builders and sweet with the aromatic scent of newly planed wood. We were given quite a large room, and in no time a lovely carpet of birch bark was spread for us, its pearly surface like satin to one's feet.

Another halt was made close to the river, which wound along among grey boulders and was fringed with ferns and forget-me-nots, while a huge plane tree sheltered us, one or two picturesque Kashmir huts

being in close proximity. I'm afraid I did not find these people quite so interesting as those in Srinagar. Though the men are of fine physique they are a lazy disobliging lot, and cry like children on the smallest provocation, such as being asked to lift a moderate load or bring in wood or provisions, and yet when they see you are firm, will do it quite willingly, having had their grumble. The Sone-marg camp will ever live as one of the cherished pictures of my mind. A sea of blue forget-me-not and giant larkspurs was the spot chosen for our "Blue Camp." The river wound in and out through green meads, with flashes of diamonds at the bends of its course; groups of fir trees varied the forest; fine walnut sentries stood on the lower slopes, and higher up birches led to the snow mountains. But these pleasant days were spoilt for me regularly every afternoon at four o'clock by a bout of fever, and I was longing to get away from the rain and the clinging wet grass this side of the Zoji Lâ into a drier climate.

The pass would have proved far more trying to me than it did had it not been for the wealth of flowers on its steep slope. Canterbury bells, pink and white and mauve, like small coffee cups; purple monkshood; deep blue gentian and wild wallflowers; wild saxifrage with its glossy leaves and pink blossoms, and a score of others. I arrived

on top, hanging on to the kind tail of my pony, to find myself being—I hope unsuccessfully—snapped by two sportsmen who were on their way down. But what a change greeted us. Instead of the emerald grass, flowery vale, and constant rain we had just left, we found short dry turf, bare rocks, and snow! But the sun was hot, and the latter only (as once graphically described in an English letter by a Goorkha) “lying about in stains.” I shall not forget the relief of the sudden change to dry heat, and the fever took its departure. Two days later we accomplished another pass, the Uмба Là, to real climbers a mere molehill, but to me rather formidable. Here again, though, fatigue was banished by the beauty of the scenery and the wealth of flowers, decreasing in size but not in mass as we neared the top. And then what a view was upon us. In bright sunshine and crystal clear air we rested on warm rocks and looked back on the flowery hill-sides up which we had climbed; mass after mass of snowy shoulders; on peak after peak of bewildering beauty. And then—for the wind was icy, the height about 15,000 feet, and we were hot—then, the descent. Four thousand feet straight down a shaly hill-side is anything but enjoyable. Again and again I longed to climb up again just to ease my muscles, but after many slips in soft shale we arrived at the bottom and had lunch in a cool

willow grove, where we met a Suru peasant riding a large yak, the first time I had seen one of these fine beasts.

Willow groves and grass oases are typical of Suru, which is arid and bare and immense in its loneliness. I was left to continue the march with our main camp by myself for four days, and met with rather an inhospitable reception from a village near Sanku. As I have almost invariably found the peasants so kind and friendly, this halt perhaps stands out vividly. Very hot and tired, I was sitting on my camp bed before turning in, my bare feet on the cool grass, when I became aware of a stream of water trickling through the grass. This rapidly increased, till I grasped the fact, the villagers above had opened a watercourse so as to flood my tents. I had speedily to get into some clothes and have my tent moved, for the ground was now a swamp, but two Goorkha soldiers left in charge of myself and the camp stopped any further trouble. I left early next morning, and my conscience was not troubled at leaving the bill of my dinner and milk, etc., amounting to about one and sixpence, unpaid.

The next day was a charming contrast. To begin with, a view, which nothing could exceed in beauty, of the Sanku Valley, at the end of which the main

peak of Nun Kun stood like a monarch in ermine robes. A pretty village, grouped round a real village green, a fine walnut tree worthy of a British blacksmith, and a bevy of smiling women and children gathered in the shade, while delightful fleecy kids frolicked about and made friends with my dachshunds. Two women, carrying baskets of fresh green peas on their heads, came up. After friendly but inquisitive greetings they begged me to accept their loads, and very welcome the peas were after a long course of potatoes and onions as our only vegetables.

It was really wonderful to find flowers at all in such a barren country as Suru, but wherever irrigation was possible there vegetation sprang up. Our camp, Perkatsic, we pitched in a field of edelweiss and the paler blue gentian, but the greatest treasure I came upon one day after a long walk before breakfast which was to await us half-way—the sky-blue poppy elsewhere described. Every vestige of fatigue vanished and I seemed to walk on air, so exciting was it to find what I believed to be the first blue poppy. Another delightful breakfasting-place was again in sight of the Nunkun peaks. We sat on a slab of rock in a sea of flowers. Larkspurs of all shades, meadowsweet, monkshood, gentians, columbines, wild geranium, and wallflower; while yellow and white jasmine and wild roses and

Clematis montana massed themselves in tangled thickets over rocks and river. The corner of little Thibet which we touched during our trip through Suru brought us past a village close to the Gompa or monastery. The march had been a tiring one along the high valley. At one point we had to send my pony round by a longer road as there was nothing but a foot-track. We had to press through scrubby bushes and cross rapid streams by means of rough boulders, after starting by climbing a steep chimney of rocks. Just across the narrow river the end of a glacier fell in a magnificent cliff of ice 150 feet in depth, of clearest chrysoprase green, and flowing at its foot a smooth band of blue water held itself delicately aloof from the rough, brown turbulence of the river. Fine pasture land stretched between the mountains on either side, where ponies and herds of black yaks were grazing in the valley of Goolmatoongo.

As we passed the small village at the head of the valley, some women ran out to look at us. They were very picturesque, though, as is usual with hill people, very dirty. They were well clad in thick woollen stuff of striped colours, and wadded felt boots which reached to the knee. Their thick black hair was plaited in a long tail, made longer by the scarlet and black woollen tasselled ropes which finished them off. But their adornments were

really fascinating—silver chains and plaques, coral, and amber, and turquoise necklaces, and silver bangles from wrist to elbow. I think they had never seen an Englishwoman before, and I was stared almost out of countenance and became keenly conscious of the very poor figure I cut in their eyes in my Harris tweed coat and skirt and thick boots, and no ornament but my wedding ring. The way to impress them would have been to don a satin gown and furs, and to have worn every article of jewellery I possessed. They were delighted with a present of tea, which they dote on. When we stopped for two days at the wonderful Gompa (monastery) the Lamas or monks came out in the most friendly manner and helped to pitch our tents. We were taken up to the monastery, which stood an isolated pile within strong walls on the crest of a rocky hillock. In our stockinged feet we were allowed to go into the Gompa, which was indeed worth seeing.

Before the several Buddhas were little piles of votive offerings, and small brass vases of flowers; orange marigolds were the favourites, or perhaps they were the easiest to obtain in that desert district. The sacred books of the monastery were placed between wooden covers elaborately painted in Thibetan arabesques of green and scarlet on a white ground, and kept in carved racks. The head

Lama, a most courteous gentleman, asked if we would like to hear their band, and to our great interest about twenty monks, some of them youths, collected in front of the Gompa. Their eyes fixed on the conductor's hand, they waited for his signal, some with eight feet long trumpets of copper banded with engraved brass, which gave forth deep booming sounds; some with flutes; others with cymbals and drums and various other quaint instruments, and then, with a clash, they started. The general impression the performance gave one was that of a tremendous passage leading up to the main theme of an overture, only they led up the whole time, never arriving, and finally stopped suddenly. It was fine and yet almost pathetic, as if the sense of music was there, only feeling its way blindfold, stumbling now on to the right path of harmony and again wandering into pitfalls of discord; and this feeling haunted me for some time; there was such passion and wailing and chaos, but no light, no love, no order. And often I think of that lonely monastery and that band of monks and would-be minstrels flinging themselves against the hard walls of ignorance in the silence of those great mountains. For generations it has been thus, and no doubt will continue for many more. No sound of modern life or progress has as yet penetrated to that far-off Gompa.

This distant corner of Thibet reminded me of the three visits we had paid at different times to Darjeeling, of which the first stands out vividly. Contrast, after all, is the *sauce piquante* of life, and this is nowhere more marked than in the sudden rise to Darjeeling from the plains below. To leave the sultry heat and dead level of the country at Siliguri, to change from the ordinary railway into the fussy little mountain train, and to climb hourly many miles of hill-side into fresh sweet air, is in itself exhilarating. Add that to the distinctive beauty and interest of the journey itself as you pass through dense forest jungle rich with feathery bamboo, great trees, and tropical vegetation spangled with orchids, and you feel you are tasting something new.

The quaint little train loops the line here and there, and continually halts in order to zigzag up the steep gradient so cleverly engineered; then it threads a path through neat tea gardens, stopping at one or two stations at increasing elevation, at each of which you don another wrap, until finally you sail with a triumphant whistle into Darjeeling station. Again you are met by contrasts to the plains railway stations, for here a merry clamouring crew of women and girls jostle each other in attempts to capture your baggage. It is wonderful, but I fear it is also very injurious to them, the

heavy loads these plucky little people will carry. No one would deny them a vote, even if only one of thanks and admiration.

Catering for an expedition into the Phallut district and farther on into Sikkim is by no means as easy as travelling into Kashmir or Kangra, for one cannot rely on getting any provisions, and at the same time portage is expensive. Everything, including grain food for the coolies (and they eat hearty rations), had to be taken, but one day's work put everything *en train* for an early start on the morrow.

Through rents in the curtain of mist we could catch flickering glimpses of Kinchenjanga, which hangs poised above Darjeeling like a perfect jewel on a slender chain of green and blue enamel. These tantalising views only served to whet our appetite, soon to be regaled on a feast of mountain scenery all along that great ridge, where the snow-line is so high that one does not realise the elevation at which one is marching till shortness of breath compels one to do so.

The morning of the start was ushered to our waking ears by the chattering and giggling of the group of Bhotia coolies, men and women, who had already gathered round our verandah, and very soon the chattering grew shrill and loud as they made up their loads in baskets, which they carried

on their backs. And a most cheery lot they were, once we had started. Occasionally, for they took bee lines straight up the hill-sides, we overtook them having a rest and a smoke on the roadside. The orchids and ferns all along our road were very pretty, and two marches out from Darjeeling we found masses of irises which in their time must have been a sight worth seeing. Just behind the little rest-house was a ridge, whence we got a distant view of the valley of Nepal. Then we dived into a rhododendron forest, which again I had to enjoy through the imagination, for I made my two trips in October and December. Still the foliage of these trees is always beautiful. I know others who have been fortunate enough to see them in full bloom for miles and miles up hill and down dale, a blaze of crimson, rose, and white blossom. I had to be content with the rich warmth of their brown trunks and glossy leaves, though three years later I was to see the crimson forests of Kangra.

Never can I be anything but grateful that I have seen, I should say, one of the world's finest sights as I sat on the hill above Sandakphu rest-house and watched the sunrise one glorious morning in October. We were wrapped in thick warm coats as we sat watching the horizon with its cold grey chain of mountains standing sternly aloof

MT. EVEREST OR
CHOMOLUNGMO.

MT. MAIKALU
OR KANALUNG.



from and above deep blue valleys in which thick layers of mist hung suspended. At last, as if touched by some invisible wand, a crimson gleam ignited in the far east, and then the torch travelled slowly along, waking the sleeping kings, Kinchenjanga, Janu, and Makalu, till it came to Mount Everest, the Sleeping Beauty whose fastness no one has yet penetrated. And as the rosy kiss touched each white peak, it sprang into golden radiance as if awaking with a joyful smile to another day. The view of Mount Everest, far distant as it is from Phallut, must, I think, strike every one in a special way. Being the highest point on the globe must after all place Mount Everest on a distinctive platform, on a romantic footing, as compared with the other great peaks, even if they run it fine as to height and majesty, and not alone because of its being the highest, but also because of its being, up to the present, only known from a distance and quite unexplored.

There were plenty of Goorkha women in Darjeeling, and they are the very nicest, jolliest little people imaginable, and the weekly market is a most amusing scene. The Bhotias, Lepchas, and Goorkhas, though they possess some similar traits, are very different in dress, looks, and customs, but they all three differ from the women round Lansdowne, Chakrata, and Almora, who with them

are again quite different from the Mohammedan women of the north-west, the Gaddis of Kangra, the women of Kashmir and Suru, or the Chitrali women of the far end of the Himalaya and Hindu Kush. Many, indeed most of them, cannot even understand the camp language of India, called Urdu, and a group of Himalayan hill-folk would be as utterly strange to each other as if they were German, French, and Italian, even stranger. One of the brightest Goorkha specimens, hailing from Darjeeling, I am fortunate enough to have as my ayah in India, as she is wife to our Goorkha bearer. She is devoted to animals, and has quite a magnetic influence over them, taming them very quickly. Once in camp some Goorkhas brought in a tiny flying squirrel, which she at once adopted, and it used to sit on her shoulder and curl its long tail like a boa round her neck. Great was her grief when after some months it died. Another of her pets was a musk deer, which still prospers. Thelassa was invaluable in camp ; she would perch on a baggage-mule like a bright-plumaged bird, wearing a blue petticoat, an orange shawl wound round her waist, a neatly fitting black velveteen jacket, and a green head-shawl. First up in the morning, her shrill voice ordering every one to their business, she would subdue it to a dove-like softness when she brought me my early tea. She

is very clean always, and changes her dress every day, and my back garden is generally gay on wash day with her voluminous skirts spread out to dry like large Japanese fans.

That there should be marked differences between the plains people and the hill people of India does not surprise one, but it is surprising that there should be such strong contrasts among the various folk living all along the Himalaya. The conditions of life are not so very dissimilar as to lead one to expect more than slight differences, but the fact remains that not only do the Mongolians and Arians differ, but that there are many varieties also among both these two distinct types.

The merest outline of camp life in the Himalaya can only be attempted in one short chapter such as this, but however short, it would be lacking in one of its most salient points were the forests to be left out. Even of more value than a great rock in a thirsty land is a great tree, and to see one in the distance on a hot march and at last to reach its generous shade is an emotion never forgotten by a grateful traveller. Even better is it to reach a forest after several days' marching, when one has had to start at four o'clock in the morning in order to get into camp before the heat of the day, having breakfasted half-way.

The forests in the Himalaya are marvellous,

stretching mile after mile, clothing hill after hill, and taking one under their shady protection for many thousands of feet, until they can climb no higher themselves. Pine trees are many and various, and, whether reigning supreme or mixing with walnuts, chestnuts, sycamores, and others, are always welcome, whether swayed by souging winds or motionless in scented sunshine. The evergreen tree holds as romantic and supreme a position among his brethren of the forests as does Everest in the mountains; and the deodars and cedars and pines speak of constancy and endurance, always the same, whether winter or summer. The birch is the most hardy and enduring of them all, and is to be found at higher elevations than any other tree. Some of the giant walnuts and planes constantly to be met with in Hazara and Kashmir can accommodate beneath their ample shade an entire camp of moderate size. To see the chenar (plane) trees in their fullest beauty one should visit Kashmir at the end of October. Avenues of poplars, their smooth trunks in ranks of burnished silver, line the roads for miles as one approaches Baramulla and Srinagar, and their leaves of gold with silver reverse scintillate against a cloudless blue sky, and at last one catches a distant sight of a grand chenar reflecting its beautiful form in the clear water, just a mass of colour, from deepest

claret to brilliant amber, in every shade of wine colour. Even without its leaves a great tree is a fine sight, the fine limbs bared to meet the onslaughts of storm and tempest, till in the spring it withdraws again from battle into domestic life and dons fresh garments of bronze and tender green.

Forest camps can be enjoyed by plains folk as well as hills, and the great forests of the Terai are a maze of wonder and mystery, but they are less homely and comforting than the mountain forests, and one could not wander through them in the same light-hearted manner as one marches and camps in the hills. They are too lonely and too savage.

Walnuts are the most representative trees of the Kaghan Valley, and spread low protecting branches, here shading the valleys, there overhanging the river Kunhar. The walnuts themselves form a staple article of diet for the winter, especially in Kashmir, being stored in barns, and are frequently ground into flour for bread-making. One year, with a sister-in-law who was visiting India, I made a flying visit into Kashmir. We had a bare fortnight at our disposal, but it was at the ideal time of year, the end of October, and as we planned our miniature tour we were justly confident of fine weather.

With one servant, who was to cook for us, and

the adored and adoring dachshund, we started from the station in what is locally known as a "Tum-tum." This particular conveyance was even more shaky than is usual, and its poor horse a weak specimen. It fell on its nose going down the first hill, and we had to walk up every succeeding rise in the ground, and ended by walking about four miles over an execrable road, after half-wading, half-stumbling in the dark over a river-bed where the cart had stuck fast.

That night we slept in a Dak bungalow, never very famed for comfort. But the season was supposed to have ended on October the 15th, and even the elementary cook who contracted there for the summer, hoping to make much more than is expressed by the meeting of two ends, had departed. In his stead was a dirty specimen of native chokidars. "Marton Charps" succeeded watery soup, but it was in vain to persuade us they had ever belonged to a sheep, even to a black one. Goat, pronounced goat, not even to be disguised by Worcester Sauce, or "oyster sauce" as it is always called by Indian cooks. Rejected soup, rejected goat, rejected sauce out of an unspeakably dirty bottle, followed by burnt custard pudding, also rejected, formed our unappetising evening meal. Here comes in the "tiffin basket," and our own biscuits and potted meat and a bottle

of Pilsener beer—discovered in the bungalow, and safe on account of its good cork and its price—were enough to send us to bed satisfied.

Two days of tonga driving brought us to Srinagar, and we had a delightful time there, and then started in a small house-boat up the river, and the contrast of that peaceful paddling on the placid waters after our jolty drive was very striking. We sat on the roof in deck-chairs, gliding past picturesque farmsteads and all the hum of the cheery river life; past great crimson and purple chenars, which gripped the banks with their mighty roots; past gold and silver poplars, standing erect as if to call out in notes of admiration the beauty of the landscape; while reflections of the blue mountains and pure snows stretched in the still waters mile after mile.

Three days later we dismissed our boat, and met the baggage and riding ponies we had ordered and found ready at Alsu. Another night was spent in a golden walnut grove, and the next day we climbed the Nagmarg Pass, from which we could see two peaks of Nanga Parbat. Then, leaving the downs of the little pass, we descended into the Lolab Valley, one of the prettiest spots of Kashmir, through a grand forest of deodars to yet another and a finer walnut grove. The cottages—for the wooden houses were quite worthy

of that name—were enclosed by rustic fences, and here it was that we found wooden barns stored to bursting with fresh walnuts, some hundreds of which we bought.

Away from the outer world for ten days we gave ourselves up to thorough enjoyment of Nature, and walked or rode all day through woods and forests, or along a pretty valley from which the harvest had lately been gathered, following the winding river, which led us back towards Baramulla. The view of Haramuk was beautiful, but we were, on the last day's march, to come suddenly upon one of the finest views it is possible to conceive of Nanga Parbat, both in outline and colouring.

We had been climbing up and up through a dense forest of deodars, creating wild astonishment among a large clan of monkeys, who bounded along in front and swung themselves from tree to tree, chattering and fussing till the dachshund was nearly out of his mind and trying hard to break away in pursuit. At last we emerged on to a plateau of stubble fields, from which a glorious panorama spread out before us. Nothing was lacking, from the sober foreground of deodars, through the middle distance of blue hills purpling in the late afternoon sunshine, to the golden haze and brilliant purity of Nanga Parbat's whole mass. We

sketched and photographed and let the lovely picture sink into our minds, where it has remained indelibly ever since. Another descent out of the sunshine down another dark hill-side took us to our last camp in Kashmir.

The greatest protection to ladies in camp (though for my part it is not the utility of dogs but love of them which appeals to me) is to have a dog or dogs. And how they enjoy going with one! My old dachshund, who is close on fifteen, I feel sure owes the prolonging of his days to the open-air life he has always led with me. But I have no hesitation in saying that the companionship and love of my dogs—dachshunds leading the van—have contributed largely to my happiness in camp. To them, of course, the main joy lies—faithful darlings—in never losing sight of master and mistress. There are no social claims which entail their being left at home, and to a dog of sensitive calibre this alone ensures perfect content and calm to the nerves.

Then, of course, there is always their forgotten past, which camp life brings back in strange and mysterious flashes. To see the dogs as they leave civilisation behind and dive into a forest, is to behold a link with the past. By long drawn breaths and upturned noses they try to reconnect themselves with that past when they roamed freely,

hunting for food, hiding in their turn from the hunters, knowing neither master nor mistress. During a day's march it is often difficult to restrain them, particularly the sporting dachshund, from going off to the wild,—and then one might whistle in vain,—but at night there also comes a haunting memory of a past which is not so free and glorious as the sunny hours of day. A nervous tremor often assails dogs as they touch, and almost draw aside, the curtain which would reveal the terrors of the past when beasts of prey nightly marauded forest and valley; and with knowledge borne of past experience they creep close to the protecting humans, and later on snuggle into their blankets with sighs of content induced not only by a sense of safety, but of a good dinner, unearned it is true, and yet provided daily. There are very few wild dogs to be found nowadays, but night is often made hideous in camp by the howls and shrill yappings of the pariahs, semi-civilised but ownerless, often hungry, and generally craven by reason of their state of transition. No-man's dogs are indeed to be pitied.

Naturally, in camp, as in any other line of life, one has to take the rough with the smooth, and here possibly, for the sake of those who might take this description of hill travelling in India to mean that it was always smooth sailing, an

accurate diary might have given accounts of many little incidents, and large ones, to show that difficulties do occur. The kind hand of Time obliterates many unpleasant memories which a diary records while they are poignant with the bitterness of the moment, whereas writing more or less from memory one is apt to recall most vividly the charm and pleasure of camping expeditions.

It is the simple life *par excellence*, getting back to Nature, but Nature is not always kind, and bad weather in tents, there is no denying, is very trying to the temper. The globe-trotter, with several months at his disposal, can pick and choose his own time, but those who live in India, whether in a civil or military capacity, are tied down by leave rules and seasons. They have generally two, at the most three, months' holiday in the year, and these must be taken during the hot weather and rains, and the latter months must sometimes fall to one's lot. Even if time and season are propitious, there must still be a certain amount of stormy weather, unless one gets over into Thibet across the watershed, but that takes time and money.

In a standing camp a trench is dug round the tents—a very necessary precaution against flooding, especially when, as so often in the Himalaya, one

has to pitch on a slope. There are very few places where stones do not come in handy to prop up beds and tables. But during heavy rain I have often had to retire to my bed, as the only dry spot, gathering with me all my books and papers as the side-pockets of the tent have become soaked. I can easily, diary or no, recall the miseries of the crossing of the Bhot Khol glacier between Suru and the Wardwan, when we had cold added to bad weather. For three days we had camped on grassy stretches in the narrow valley below, alongside of the river, which tumbled and foamed, here thundering over boulders, there disappearing for a moment under a snow bridge to emerge on the other side in a creamy lather of impatience, till it finally poured its turbulent waters into a broad shallow river with a silent swift current, through which I had ridden.

Riding through water is very unpleasant, to my mind. When crossing a rough torrent I have had three or four men hanging on to my pony's sides to keep him up against the strong current, and my husband's hand on the bridle, having to shut my eyes as I got so giddy and felt as if we were all being swept away ; while crossing a shallow stream with any swiftness of current, I have had to put my arms round the pony's neck and shut my eyes, trusting to his proven knowledge and sagacity to

carry me safely over. While we were stationary those three days (and on that trip it was almost a record for one camp) several climbs and explorations had been negotiated in separate parties by our Goorkhas, and then we moved up the steep track which led up on to the glacier, and further up on to the pass. Wherever a little soil had found a hold on the rocks we found gentians and rock roses and tiny clinging rock plants. This was my first introduction to a glacier, and very beautiful I found it. Every shade of chrysoprase and turquoise shone in the opaque mass. It was easy walking, and a lovely morning, and I enjoyed every hour. We dawdled about and photographed, and I was roped to my husband and our old friend Karbir, and conveyed over a few seracs.

Then, suddenly, as is so often the case in the mountains, the weather changed, and by the time we got to the top of the pass—a wretched crowd of about sixty souls, ourselves, sixteen Goorkhas, servants, three baggage-ponies and yaks, and coolies, my own Yarkandi pony bringing up the rear—we could only see a few yards in front of us. The poor Dobi walked delicately, casting deprecating glances at me and on the verge of tears. A halt was called and, added to the pitiless driving rain and mist, an icy wind now blew, and as the glacier was deeply crevassed my husband decided

that we must camp then and there on the pass, as it would be unsafe to continue the long march.

This was quite contrary to our morning's plans, laid under a sunny sky, and therefore no fuel had been brought, and we were too high to find wood. Nothing but ice and frozen snow, rain, and wind. My camp bed was soon put up, and I was wrapped up on it, but nothing could keep one warm or dry. The Goorkhas are a standing lesson to one under adverse conditions. The more acute the condition, whether hot or cold or wet, especially during some anti-climax, the better they rise to the occasion and laugh away any gloom, chaffing each other like school-boys, tripping each other up while pitching the tents, and altogether as jolly as they can be.

As soon as they got our tent up, I proposed hot soup warmed in my Etna stove. This cheering hope was dashed to the ground by the discovery that the methylated spirit can had sprung a leak and not a drop was left, so we had a little ginger wine (a comforting dram for cold camps), and waited for the return of the Suru coolies, who had gone down the glacier in search of wood. Birch trees are found at a high elevation, but even so it was three hours before the men got back with bundles of wood, and then it was wet. However, tea was served out all round directly water

sufficiently hot could be obtained—it was not allowed to come to boiling-point—and round the several small fires, which were soon smoking, our party tried to get dry. After a supper of hot barley broth we turned in early and hoped for the morning.

It broke in thick mist, but the rain had stopped, and the leader of the party smelt latent sunshine. So tents were struck and heavy wet loads rolled up, and coolies encouraged, and at last we made our way down the glacier, hopping over moraine and crevasses. The day before, one of the Goorkhas dropped his cap into a crevasse forty feet deep, and was let down on a rope to recover it. For once the length of my long dogs came in handy, and they took the small crevasses very well; the other dogs, a white setter and an Airedale, bounded along. It was a weird scene, and one felt surrounded by mountain spirits. Here and there, as the mist shifted, huge shapes loomed out only to be hidden again from our sight. Gradually the sun came out, and the mountains emerged, and at last brilliant sunshine burst upon us, scattering the mists till the last vestige floated away on gauzy wings, and glorious crystal-cut views up and down the glacier put new heart into us all.

Another difficulty in far-afield marching lies in the bridges. I crossed one, called *par politesse* a

bridge, which was only two huge trees lashed together with branches, and though their roots were firmly embedded in rocks and stones, the middle sagged even more than a dachshund. I am told that bridge was worse than a rope bridge, and that the latter need now hold no fears for me, but I am content to rest on my laurels. The ordinary bridges, even, thrown across quite ordinary chasms, are a trial to me, though by the end of a season in camp I find them quite easy to cross, showing that the effect of out-of-door life on the nerves is a bracing one.

To be free for a few weeks from the ceaseless interruption of house-keeping and station life is in itself a blessing. And yet, such contradictory creatures are we, that deeply as one enjoys life in the wilds, and exclaims at first that the simple life is the only life to lead, yet after two or three months in camp one absolutely revels in getting back to civilisation. The comforts and dainty appointments of one's home, one's own garden and its cultivated treasures, call one back from the wild with voices of welcome, and to return to the world of work and progress is to rejoice in new life and strength gathered from the wild to be turned to fresh use. And just as the dogs nestle to our side in camp, feeling that they have crossed a Rubicon the other side of which can

never again really afford a permanent residence, so do we feel that there is no place like home.

Still, the dogs enjoy a day's hunting now and then, and we prize every fresh expedition in the hills as another bead strung on to the thread of happy memory, while we realise our great good fortune in having the run of both—the world and the wild.

